

phrases (Gen. 36. 37). **Tob.** The region between Syria and Ammonitis. It was here that Jephthah took refuge (Judg. 11. 3). **Maacah.** Perhaps a district at the base of Hermon not far from Geshur. The "Ishtob" of the Authorized Version is clearly a mistake for "men of Tob." **Were by themselves in the field.** In 1 Chron. 19. 7, we read, "and pitched before Medeba." This was once a town of Reuben (Josh. 13. 9), but now perhaps captured by the Ammonites. It was four miles southeast of Heshbon. This is one of the places mentioned on the Moabite stone. It seems that the Syrian allies failed to form a junction with the Ammonites, but were separated by about one day's march.

9. The battle was set against him before and behind. This is another way of saying that he had an army on either side of him. He marches between them so as to hinder the Syrians from joining the Ammonites. **He chose of all,** etc. Joab was compelled to divide his forces. He takes the best troops and joins battle with the allied Syrians, whom he regarded as the more dangerous, and he sends the rest in command of Abishai, his brother, against the Ammonites.

11. Whether Joab and Abishai were to attack at the same time is not clear, but the probability is that Joab would attack the Syrians while Abishai simply kept the Ammonites from their allies.

12. Be of good courage. Joab, it is said, was a man of few words; but the speech, though very brief, had the desired effect. A more literal translation would be: Be valiant, and show yourself valiant, etc., **for the cities of our God.** The cities of Israel where Jehovah was worshipped, which, if the Ammonites were successful, would fall into heathen hands and become centers of idol worship. "Every noble motive of life, love of right, love of country, love of family, and self-love, urged those men to unusual valor."—*Hurlbut and Doherty.* **And the Lord do that which seemeth him good.** The tense of the verb is future, "Jehovah will do," etc. The language is a mixture of bravery and resignation, as much as to say, "Whatever is the will of God, let us fight like men."

13. They fled before him. Mercenary troops seldom furnish the best soldiers. They fight for gold, not for glory; for pay, not for principle. Or, as Tacitus would say: "There would be for them neither glory in victory, nor shame in flight."

14. They likewise fled before Abishai. The Ammonites saw their danger and the impossibility of a junction with their allies, and consequently very wisely fled to their impregnable fortress. **Then Joab returned . . . to Jerusalem.** The general reason assigned for this movement on the part of Joab is that it was too late in the season to carry on a successful siege. (See chap. 11. 1.) It is probable, however, that Abishai with a portion of the army was left near the capital of the Ammonites.

15. They gathered themselves together. How long afterward is not stated; it must, however, have required considerable time to send messengers to Mesopotamia and assemble large forces for another campaign.

16. Hadadzezer. The name is written Hadadzezer in chapter 8. 3, but Hadadzezer in Chronicles. The two Hebrew letters η and γ are so similar as to be confounded by beginners in Hebrew. There is no doubt that Hadadzezer is the correct form. Hadad was the name of a Syrian god. Compare the name Benhadad. The king's name translated into English would be "Hadad is help." **The River.** Whenever the word is written with a capital in the Revised Version it means the Euphrates. **Helam.** This place has not been identified, though various places have been suggested. The same word is again given, though the spelling is slightly different in the original, in verse 17. The word does not occur in the account of Chronicles. The word as far as the letters are concerned might be rendered "their force," or "their army," that is, "the army came with Shobach." But it is better to regard it as a proper name. **Shobach.** Shophach (according to 1 Chron. 19. 18-18) was the commander-in-chief of Hadadzezer's army.

17. He gathered all Israel together. David foreseeing the formidable struggle about to take place, and the necessity of the most brilliant generalship, assumes control of the entire army. We have no reason to think that he takes command in person from any dissatisfaction with his generals, or "that the adventure was too critical to be intrusted to any lieutenant." David was a great military leader, full of the military spirit. It would have been impossible for him to stay at home when the battle of battles was to be fought.

18. The men of seven hundred chariots, and forty thousand horsemen. The number in 1 Chron. 19. 18, is given as seven thousand chariots and forty thousand footmen. There is evidently an error of some kind. This is not strange, since the Hebrew method of employing letters and dots for numerals was liable to give occasion to serious errors. It is best to acknowledge that the text in Samuel or Chronicles is corrupt; which, it is impossible to tell. (Compare 2 Sam. 8. 3, *f.*, with 1 Chron. 18. 4, and this verse with the parallel account in 1 Chron. 19. 18.) **And smote Shobach . . . that he died there.** This was a death-blow to the Syrians.

19. All the kings. The petty kings or vassal princes who had come to the help of Hadadzezer. **Made peace with Israel, and served them.** They threw off the yoke of the Syrian king and became the subjects of David. Though not stated in so many words it is probable that Hadadzezer also made peace with Israel at this time. Some think that he violated his treaty, engaged in a third war, and was totally defeated. (See chap. 8. 3-8.)