

However, he failed to satisfy the religious zealots, it is evident that Saul obtained a political ascendancy over the dissentient tribes, and did the first substantial work after Moses for the founding of a Hebrew nation. His fame is obscured by the evident ill-will of the sacerdotal party, which transferred its admiration to a more unscrupulous man of blood who became his successor. David closely filled the prophetic ideal of a leader, and by a series of sanguinary wars succeeded in establishing himself as a veritable king. At his hand the tribes round about, one after another, came to grief, the dominion of Israel was extended in all directions, Jebus, the site of Jerusalem and the last stronghold of the Canaanites, was besieged and taken, and there the victorious chieftain established his seat of government. Such distinguished success in arms threw a glamor around this man's name which to this day has made him pass for what he was not. He has been made out a saint, and credited with writing the book of *Psalms*, the most spiritual part of the Old Testament, and indeed of the whole Bible; and even the gospel writers were anxious to make it appear that Jesus was descended in direct line from him. But, as we see him, David was only another barbarian. He suited, in most respects the religious leaders of his tribe, but he suited them because of his wholesale butcheries and most abominable cruelties.* Not from such a man nor in an age which

* Here is the record of his treatment of prisoners of war. He had captured the city of Rabbah, the Ammonite capital, "and he brought forth the people that were therein, and put them under saws, and under harrows of iron, and under axes of iron, and made them pass through the brick-kiln (*i.e.* roasted them alive); and thus he did unto all the cities of the children of Ammon." 1 Sam. xii. 31.