

1SAMUEL 17: 1 Now the Philistines gathered together their armies to battle; and they were gathered together at Socoh, which belongs to Judah, and encamped between Socoh and Azekah, in Ephesdammim.

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The Philistines gather together against Israel at Ephes-dammim, and Saul and his men pitch their camp near the valley of Elah, 1Sam 17:1-3. Goliath of Gath, a gigantic man, whose height was six cubits and a span, defies the armies of Israel, and proposes to end all contests by single combat; his armor is described, 1Sam 17:4-11. Saul and his host are greatly dismayed, 1Sam 17:12. David, having been sent by his father with provisions to his brethren in the army, hears the challenge, inquires into the circumstances, thinks it a reproach to Israel that no man can be found to accept the challenge, is brought before Saul, and proposes to undertake the combat, vv. 13-32. Saul objects to his youth and inexperience, 1Sam 17:33. David shows the grounds on which he undertakes it, 1Sam 17:34-37. Saul arms him with his own armor: but David, finding them an encumbrance, puts them off, and takes his staff, his sling, and five stones out of the brook, and goes to meet Goliath, 1Sam 17:38-40. The Philistine draws near, despises, defies, and curses him, 1Sam 17:41-44. David retorts his defiance, 1Sam 17:45-47. They draw near to each other, and David slings a stone, hits Goliath in the forehead, slays him, and cuts off his head with his own sword, 1Sam 17:48-51. The Philistines flee, and are pursued by the Israelites, 1Sam 17:52, 1Sam 17:53. David brings the head of the Philistine to Jerusalem, 1Sam 17:54. Conversation between Saul and Abner concerning David, who is in consequence brought before Saul, 1Sam 17:55-58.

#### Verse 1

Now the Philistines gathered together - Calmet thinks that this war happened eight years after the anointing of David, and ten or twelve years after the war with the Amalekites. We have already seen that there was war between Saul and the Philistines all his days. See 1Sam 14:52.

Shochoh and Azekah - Places which lay to the south of Jerusalem and to the west of Bethlehem; about five leagues from the former. Ephes-dammim was somewhere in the vicinity, but it is not known where. See Calmet.

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1SAMUEL 17: 2 Saul and the men of Israel were gathered together, and encamped in the valley of Elah, and set the battle in array against the Philistines.

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#### Verse 2

The valley of Elah - Some translate this the turpentine valley, or the valley of the terebinth trees; and others, the valley of oaks. The situation of this valley is well known.

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1SAMUEL 17: 3 The Philistines stood on the mountain on the one side, and Israel stood on the mountain on the other side: and there was a valley between them.

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## Verse 3

The Philistines stood on a mountain - These were two eminences or hills, from which they could see and talk with each other.

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1SAMUEL 17: 4 There went out a champion out of the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span.

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## Verse 4

There went out a champion - Our word champion comes from *campus*, the field; *Campio est enim ille qui pugnat in campo, hoc est, in castris*, "Champion is he, properly, who fights in the field; i.e., in camps." A man well skilled in arms, strong, brave, and patriotic.

But is this the meaning of the original איש הבנים *ish habbenayim*, a middle man, the man between two; that is, as here, the man who undertakes to settle the disputes between two armies or nations. So our ancient champions settled disputes between contending parties by what was termed *camp fight*, hence the *campio* or champion. The versions know not well what to make of this man. The Vulgate calls him *sir spurius*, "a bastard;" the Septuagint, *ανηρ δυνατος*, "a strong or powerful man;" the Targum, *גברא מביניהון* *gabra mibbeynehon*, "a man from between them;" the Arabic, *rujil jibar*, "a great or gigantic man;" the Syriac is the same; and Josephus terms him *ανηρ παμμεγεθιστατος*, "an immensely great man." The Vulgate has given him the notation of *spurius* or *bastard*, because it considered the original as expressing a son of two, i.e., a man whose parents are unknown. Among all these I consider our word *champion*, as explained above, the best and most appropriate to the original terms.

Whose height was six cubits and a span - The word *cubit* signifies the length from *cubitus*, the elbow, to the top of the middle finger, which is generally rated at one foot six inches. The *span* is the distance from the top of the middle finger to the end of the thumb, when extended as far as they can stretch on a plain; this is ordinarily nine inches. Were we sure that these were the measures, and their extent, which are intended in the original words, we could easily ascertain the height of this Philistine; it would then be nine feet nine inches, which is a tremendous height for a man.

But the versions are not all agreed in his height. The Septuagint read *τεσσαρων πηχεων και σπιθαμης*, four cubits and a span; and Josephus reads the same. It is necessary however to observe that the Septuagint, in the Codex Alexandrinus, read with the Hebrew text. But what was the length of the ancient cubit? This has been variously computed; eighteen inches, twenty inches and a half, and twenty-one inches. If we take the first measurement, he was nine feet nine; if the second, and read *palm* instead of *span*, with the Vulgate and others, he was ten feet seven inches and a half; if we take the last, which is the estimate of Graevius, with the *span*, he was eleven feet three inches; or if we go to the exactest measurement, as laid down in Bishop Cumberland's tables, where he computes the cubit at 21.888 inches, the *span* at 10.944 inches, and the *palm* at 3.684 inches, then the six cubits and the *span* will make exactly 11 feet 10.272 inches. If we take the *palm* instead of the *span*, then the height will be 11 feet 3.012 inches. But I still think that the nine feet nine inches is the most reasonable.

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1SAMUEL 17: 5 He had a helmet of brass on his head, and he was clad with a coat of mail; and the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of brass.

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#### Verse 5

He was armed with a coat of mail - The words in the original, שרון קשקשים shiryon kaskassim, mean a coat of mail formed of plates of brass overlapping each other, like the scales of a fish, or tiles of a house. This is the true notion of the original terms.

With thin plates of brass or iron, overlapping each other, were the ancient coats of mail formed in different countries; many formed in this way may be now seen in the tower of London.

The weight - five thousand shekels - Following Bishop Cumberland's tables, and rating the shekel at two hundred and nineteen grains, and the Roman ounce at four hundred and thirty-eight grains, we find that Goliath's coat of mail, weighing five thousand shekels, was exactly one hundred and fifty-six pounds four ounces avoirdupois. A vast weight for a coat of mail, but not all out of proportion to the man.

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1SAMUEL 17: 6 He had brass shin armour on his legs, and a javelin of brass between his shoulders.

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#### Verse 6

Greaves of brass upon his legs - This species of armor may be seen on many ancient monuments. It was a plate of brass (though perhaps sometimes formed of laminae or plates, like the mail) which covered the shin or fore part of the leg, from the knee down to the instep, and was buckled with straps behind the leg. From ancient monuments we find that it was commonly worn only on one leg. Vegetius, de Re Militari, says, *Pedites Scutati etiam ferreas ocreas in dextris cruribus copebantur accipere.* "The foot soldiers, called Scutati, from their particular species of shield, were obliged to use iron greaves on their right legs." One of these may be seen in the monument of the gladiator Buto, in Montfaucon; and another in the Mosaic pavement at Bognor, in Surrey.

A target of brass between his shoulders - When not actually engaged, soldiers threw their shields behind their back, so that they appeared to rest or hang between the shoulders.

There are different opinions concerning this piece of armor, called here כידון kidon. Some think it was a covering for the shoulders; others, that it was a javelin or dart; others, that it was a lance; some, a club; and others, a sword. It is certainly distinguished from the shield, 1Sam 17:41, and is translated a spear, Jos 8:18.

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1SAMUEL 17: 7 The staff of his spear was like a weaver's beam; and his spear's head weighed six hundred shekels of iron: and his shield bearer went before him.

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#### Verse 7

The staff on his spear was like a weaver's beam - Either like that on which the warp is rolled, or that on which the cloth is rolled. We know not how thick this was, because there were several sorts of looms, and the sizes of the beams very dissimilar. Our woollen, linen, cotton, and silk looms are all different in the size of their beams; and I have seen several that I should not suppose too thick, though they might be too short, for Goliath's spear.

His spear's head weighed six hundred shekels of iron - That is, his spear's head was of iron, and it weighed six hundred shekels; this, according to the former computation, would amount to eighteen pounds twelve ounces.

And one bearing a shield - הצננה hatstsinnah, from צן tsan, pointed or penetrating, if it do not mean some kind of a lance, must mean a shield, with what is called the umbo, a sharp protuberance, in the middle, with which they could as effectually annoy their enemies as defend themselves. Many of the old Highland targets were made with a projecting dagger in the center. Taking the proportions of things unknown to those known, the armor of Goliath is supposed to have weighed not less than two hundred and seventy-two pounds thirteen ounces! Plutarch informs us that the ordinary weight of a soldier's panoply, or complete armor, was one talent, or sixty pounds; and that one Alcimus, in the army of Demetrius, was considered as a prodigy, because his panoply weighed two talents, or one hundred and twenty pounds.

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1SAMUEL 17: 8 He stood and cried to the armies of Israel, and said to them, "Why have you come out to set your battle in array? Am I not a Philistine, and you servants to Saul? Choose a man for yourselves, and let him come down to me.

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Verse 8

I a Philistine - The Targum adds much to this speech. This is the substance: "I am Goliath the Philistine of Gath, who killed the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas the priests; and led into captivity the ark of the covenant of Jehovah, and placed it in the temple of Dagon my god; and it remained in the cities of the Philistines seven months. Also, in all our battles I have gone at the head of the army, and we conquered and cut down men, and laid them as low as the dust of the earth; and to this day the Philistines have not granted me the honor of being chief of a thousand men. And ye, men of Israel, what noble exploit has Saul, the son of Kish, of Gibeah, done, that ye should have made him king over you? If he be a hero, let him come down himself and fight with me; but if he be a weak or cowardly man, then choose you out a man that he may come down to me."

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1SAMUEL 17: 9 If he be able to fight with me, and kill me, then will we be your servants; but if I prevail against him, and kill him, then you will be our servants, and serve us."

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Verse 9

Then will we be your servants - Of this stipulation we hear nothing farther.

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1SAMUEL 17: 10 The Philistine said, "I defy the armies of Israel this day! Give me a man, that we may fight together!"

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Verse 10

I defy - אני חרפתי ani cheraphti, "I strip and make bare," the armies of Israel; for none dared to fight him. From the Dhunoor Veda Shastra it appears that, among the Hindoos, it was common, before the commencement of an engagement, to challenge the enemy by throwing out some terms of abuse, similar to those used by Goliath. We find this also in Homer: his heroes scold each other heartily before they begin to fight. See on 1Sam 17:43 (note).

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1SAMUEL 17: 11 When Saul and all Israel heard those words of the Philistine, they were dismayed, and greatly afraid.

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Verse 11

Saul and all Israel - were dismayed - They saw no man able to accept the challenge.

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1SAMUEL 17: 12 Now David was the son of that Ephrathite of Bethlehem Judah, whose name was Jesse; and he had eight sons: and the man was an old man in the days of Saul, stricken among men.

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Verse 12

The 12th verse, to the 31st inclusive, are wanting in the Septuagint; as also the 41st verse; and from the 54th to the end; with the first five verses of 1 Samuel 18, and the 9th, 10th, 11th, 17th, 18th, and 19th of the same.

All these parts are found in the Codex Alexandrinus; but it appears that the MS. from which the Codex Alexandrinus was copied, had them not. See observations at the end of this chapter, 1Sam 17:58 (note). Dr. Kennicott has rendered it very probable that these portions are not a genuine part of the text.

Notwithstanding what Bishop Warburton and others have done to clear the chronology of the present printed Hebrew, it is impossible to make a clear consistent sense of the history, unless these verses are omitted. Let any one read the eleventh verse in connection with the thirty-second, leave out the forty-first, and connect the fifty-fourth with the sixth of 1 Samuel 18, and he will be perfectly convinced that there is nothing wanting to make the sense complete; to say nothing of the other omissions noted above. If the above be taken in as genuine, the ingenuity of man has hitherto failed to free the whole from apparent contradiction and absurdity. I must confess that where every one else has failed, I have no hope of succeeding: I must, therefore, leave all farther attempts to justify the chronology; and refer to those who have written for and against the genuineness of this part of the common Hebrew text. At the end of the chapter I shall introduce some extracts from Kennicott and Pilkington: and leave the whole with the unprejudiced and discerning reader.

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1SAMUEL 17: 13 The three eldest sons of Jesse had gone after Saul to the battle: and the names of his three sons who went to the battle were Eliab the firstborn, and next to him Abinadab, and the third Shammah.

1SAMUEL 17: 14 David was the youngest; and the three eldest followed Saul.

1SAMUEL 17: 15 Now David went back and forth from Saul to feed his father's sheep at Bethlehem.

1SAMUEL 17: 16 The Philistine drew near morning and evening, and presented himself forty days.

1SAMUEL 17: 17 Jesse said to David his son, "Now take for your brothers an ephah of this parched grain, and these ten loaves, and carry them quickly to the camp to your brothers;

1SAMUEL 17: 18 and bring these ten cheeses to the captain of their thousand, and see how your brothers are doing, and bring back news."

#### Verse 18

Carry these ten cheeses - Cheeses of milk, says the margin. In the East they do not make what we call cheese: they press the milk but slightly, and carry it in rush baskets. It is highly salted, and little different from curds.

1SAMUEL 17: 19 Now Saul, and they, and all the men of Israel, were in the valley of Elah, fighting with the Philistines.

#### Verse 19

Fighting with the Philistines - See at the end of the chapter, 1Sam 17:58 (note).

1SAMUEL 17: 20 David rose up early in the morning, and left the sheep with a keeper, and took, and went, as Jesse had commanded him; and he came to the place of the wagons, as the army which was going out to the fight shouted for the battle.

1SAMUEL 17: 21 Israel and the Philistines put the battle in array, army against army.

1SAMUEL 17: 22 David left his baggage in the hand of the keeper of the baggage, and ran to the army, and came and greeted his brothers.

1SAMUEL 17: 23 As he talked with them, behold, there came up the champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name, out of the ranks of the Philistines, and spoke according to the same words: and David heard them.

1SAMUEL 17: 24 All the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him, and were terrified.

1SAMUEL 17: 25 The men of Israel said, "Have you seen this man who has come up? He has surely come up to defy Israel. It shall be, that the man who kills him, the king will enrich him with great riches, and will give him his daughter, and make his father's house free in Israel."

1SAMUEL 17: 26 David spoke to the men who stood by him, saying, "What shall be done to the man who kills this Philistine, and takes away the reproach from Israel? For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?"

1SAMUEL 17: 27 The people answered him in this way, saying, "So shall it be done to the man who kills him."

1SAMUEL 17: 28 Eliab his eldest brother heard when he spoke to the men; and Eliab's anger was kindled against David, and he said, "Why have you come down? With whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know your pride, and the naughtiness of your heart; for you have come down that you might see the battle."

1SAMUEL 17: 29 David said, "What have I now done? Is there not a cause?"

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#### Verse 29

Is there not a cause? - הלא דבר הוא halo dabar hu. I believe the meaning is what several of the versions express: I have spoken but a word. And should a man be made an offender for a word?

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1SAMUEL 17: 30 He turned away from him toward another, and spoke like that again; and the people answered him again the same way.

1SAMUEL 17: 31 When the words were heard which David spoke, they rehearsed them before Saul; and he sent for him.

1SAMUEL 17: 32 David said to Saul, "Let no man's heart fail because of him. Your servant will go and fight with this Philistine."

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#### Verse 32

And David said - This properly connects with the eleventh verse.

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1SAMUEL 17: 33 Saul said to David, "You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for you are but a youth, and he a man of war from his youth."

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#### Verse 33

Thou art but a youth - Supposed to be about twenty-two or twenty-three years of age.

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1SAMUEL 17: 34 David said to Saul, "Your servant was keeping his father's sheep; and when a lion or a bear came, and took a lamb out of the flock,

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#### Verse 34

Thy servant kept his father's sheep - He found it necessary to give Saul the reasons why he undertook this combat; and why he expected to be victorious.

1. I have courage to undertake it, and strength to perform it.
2. Both have been tried in a very signal manner: (1). A lion came upon my flock, and seized a lamb; I ran after him, he attacked me, I seized hold of him by his shaggy locks, smote and slew him, and delivered the lamb. (2). A bear came in the same way, and I attacked and slew him.
3. This, with whom I am to fight, is a Philistine, an uncircumcised man; one who is an enemy to God: God therefore will not be on his side. On that ground I have nothing to fear.
4. He has defied the armies of the Lord; and has in effect defied Jehovah himself: therefore the battle is the Lord's, and he will stand by me.
5. I have perfect confidence in his protection and defense; for they that trust in him shall never be confounded.
6. I conclude, therefore, that the Lord, who delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, will deliver me out of the hand of the Philistine.

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1SAMUEL 17: 35 I went out after him, and struck him, and rescued it out of his mouth. When he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and struck him, and killed him.

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Verse 35

The slaying of the lion and the bear mentioned here, must have taken place at two different times; perhaps the verse should be read thus: I went out after him, (the lion). and smote him, etc. And when he (the bear) rose up against me, I caught him by the beard and slew him.

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1SAMUEL 17: 36 Your servant struck both the lion and the bear. This uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, since he has defied the armies of the living God."

1SAMUEL 17: 37 David said, "The LORD who delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine." Saul said to David, "Go; and the LORD shall be with you."

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Verse 37

Go, and the Lord be with thee - Saul saw that these were reasonable grounds of confidence, and therefore wished him success.

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1SAMUEL 17: 38 Saul dressed David with his clothing. He put a helmet of brass on his head, and he clad him with a coat of mail.

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## Verse 38

Saul armed David - He knew that although the battle was the Lord's, yet prudent means should be used to secure success.

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1SAMUEL 17: 39 David strapped his sword on his clothing, and he tried to move; for he had not tested it. David said to Saul, "I can't go with these; for I have not tested them." David took them off.

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## Verse 39

I cannot go with these - In ancient times it required considerable exercise and training to make a man expert in the use of such heavy armor; armor which in the present day scarcely a man is to be found who is able to carry; and so it must have been then, until that practice which arises from frequent use had made the proprietor perfect. I have not proved them says David: I am wholly unaccustomed to such armor and it would be an encumbrance to me.

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1SAMUEL 17: 40 He took his staff in his hand, and chose for himself five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in the shepherd's bag which he had, even in his wallet. His sling was in his hand; and he drew near to the Philistine.

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## Verse 40

He took his staff - What we would call his crook.

Five smooth stones -

1. Had they been rough or angular, they would not have passed easily through the air, and their asperities would, in the course of their passage, have given them a false direction.
2. Had they not been smooth, they could not have been readily despatched from the sling.

A shepherd's bag - That in which he generally carried his provisions while keeping the sheep in the open country.

And his sling - The sling, both among the Greeks and Hebrews, has been a powerful offensive weapon. See what has been said on Jdg 20:16 (note). It is composed of two strings and a leathern strap; the strap is in the middle, and is the place where the stone or bullet lies. The string on the right end of the strap is firmly fastened to the hand; that on the left is held between the thumb and middle joint of the fore finger. It is then whirled two or three times round the head; and when discharged, the finger and thumb let go their hold of the left end string. The velocity and force of the sling are in proportion to the distance of the strap, where the bullet lies, from the shoulder joint. Hence the ancient Baleares, or inhabitants of Majorca and Minorca, are said to have had three slings of different lengths, the longest they used when the enemy was at the greatest distance; the middle one, on their nearer approach; and the shortest, when they came into the ordinary fighting distance in the field. The shortest is the most certain, though not the most powerful. The Balearians are said to have had one of their slings constantly bound about their head, to have used the second as a

girdle, and to have carried the third always in their hand. See Diod. Sic. lib. v., c. 18, p. 286, edit. Bipont.

In the use of the sling it requires much practice to hit the mark; but when once this dexterity is acquired, the sling is nearly as fatal as the musket or bow; see on 1Sam 17:49 (note). David was evidently an expert marksman; and his sling gave him greatly the advantage over Goliath; an advantage of which the giant does not seem to have been aware. He could hit him within any speaking distance, if he missed once, he had as many chances as he had stones; and after all, being unencumbered with armor, young, and athletic, he could have saved his life by flight. Against him the Philistine could do but little, except in close fight; it is true he appears to have had a javelin or missile spear, (see on 1Sam 17:6 (note)), but David took care to prevent the use of all such weapons, by giving him the first blow.

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1SAMUEL 17: 41 The Philistine came on and drew near to David; and the man who bore the shield went before him.

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Verse 41

The man that bare the shield - See on 1Sam 17:7 (note).

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1SAMUEL 17: 42 When the Philistine looked about, and saw David, he disdained him; for he was but a youth, and ruddy, and withal of a fair face.

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Verse 42

He disdained him - He held him in contempt; he saw that he was young, and from his ruddy complexion supposed him to be effeminate.

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1SAMUEL 17: 43 The Philistine said to David, "Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?" The Philistine cursed David by his gods.

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Verse 43

Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves? - It is very likely that Goliath did not perceive the sling, which David might have kept coiled up within his hand.

Cursed David by his gods - Prayed his gods to curse him. This long parley between David and Goliath is quite in the style of those times. A Hindoo sometimes in a fit of anger says to his enemy, The goddess Kalee shall devour thee! May Doorga destroy thee! Homer's heroes have generally an altercation before they engage; and sometimes enter into geographical and genealogical discussions, and vaunt and scold most contemptibly.

1SAMUEL 17: 44 The Philistine said to David, "Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the sky, and to the animals of the field."

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Verse 44

Come to me, and I will give thy flesh - He intended, as soon as he could lay hold on him, to pull him to pieces.

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1SAMUEL 17: 45 Then David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a javelin: but I come to you in the name of the LORD of Armies, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied.

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Verse 45

Thou comest to me with a sword - I come to thee with the name (בשם beshem) of Jehovah of hosts; the God of the armies of Israel. What Goliath expected from his arms, David expected from the ineffable name.

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1SAMUEL 17: 46 Today, the LORD will deliver you into my hand. I will strike you, and take your head from off you. I will give the dead bodies of the army of the Philistines this day to the birds of the sky, and to the wild animals of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel,

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Verse 46

This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand - This was a direct and circumstantial prophecy of what did take place.

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1SAMUEL 17: 47 and that all this assembly may know that the LORD doesn't save with sword and spear: for the battle is the LORD's, and he will give you into our hand."

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Verse 47

For the battle is the Lord's - It is the Lord's war: you are fighting against him and his religion, as the champion of your party; I am fighting for God, as the champion of his cause.

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1SAMUEL 17: 48 When the Philistine arose, and came and drew near to meet David, David hurried, and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine.

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Verse 48

The Philistine arose - This was an end of the parley; the Philistine came forward to meet David, and David on his part ran forward to meet the Philistine.

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1SAMUEL 17: 49 David put his hand in his bag, took a stone, and slung it, and struck the Philistine in his forehead; and the stone sank into his forehead, and he fell on his face to the earth.

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Verse 49

Smote the Philistine in his forehead - Except his face, Goliath was everywhere covered over with strong armor. Either he had no beaver to his helmet, or it was lifted up so as to expose his forehead; but it does not appear that the ancient helmets had any covering for the face. The Septuagint however supposes that the stone passed through the helmet, and sank into his forehead: *Και διεδου ὁ λιθος δια της περικεφαλαιας εις το μετωπον αυτου*, "and the stone passed through his helmet, and sank into his skull." To some this has appeared perfectly improbable; but we are assured by ancient writers that scarcely any thing could resist the force of the sling.

Diodorus Siculus, lib. v., c. 18, p. 287, edit. Bipont, says "The Baleares, in time of war, sling greater stones than any other people, and with such force, that they seem as if projected from a catapult. *Διο και κατα τας τειχομαχιας εν ταις προσβολαις τυ π τ ο ν τ ε ς τους προ των επαλξεων εφεστωτας κατατραυματιζουσιν· εν δε ταις παραταξεσι τους τε θυρεους, και τα κρηνη, και παν σκεπαστηριον ὄπλον συντριβουσι. Κατα δε την ευστοχιαν ούτως ακριβεις εισιν, ὡστε κατα το πλειστον μη ἄμαρτανειν του προκειμενου σκοπου* Therefore, in assaults made on fortified towns, they grievously wound the besieged; and in battle they break in pieces the shields, helmets, and every species of armor by which the body is defended. And they are such exact marksmen that they scarcely ever miss that at which they aim." The historian accounts for their great accuracy and power in the use of the sling, from this circumstance: *Αιτιαι δε τουτων, κ.τ.λ.* "They attain to this perfection by frequent exercise from their childhood; for while they are young and under their mother's care, they are obliged to learn to sling; for they fasten bread for a mark at the top of the pole; and till the child hit the bread he must remain fasting; and when he has hit it, the mother gives it to him to eat." - Ibid.

I have given these passages at large, because they contain several curious facts, and sufficiently account for the force and accuracy with which David slung his stone at Goliath. We find also in the *μη ἄμαρτανειν*, not miss the mark, of the historian, the true notion of *ἄμαρτανειν*, to sin, which I have contended for elsewhere. He who sins, though he aims thereby at his gratification and profit, misses the mark of present and eternal felicity.

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1SAMUEL 17: 50 So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and struck the Philistine, and killed him; but there was no sword in the hand of David.

1SAMUEL 17: 51 Then David ran, and stood over the Philistine, and took his sword, and drew it out of its sheath, and killed him, and cut off his head therewith. When the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled.

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Verse 51

When the Philistines saw their champion was dead, they fled - They were panic-struck; and not being willing to fulfill the condition which was stipulated by Goliath, they precipitately left the field. The Israelites took a proper advantage of these circumstances, and totally routed their enemies.

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1SAMUEL 17: 52 The men of Israel and of Judah arose, and shouted, and pursued the Philistines, until you come to Gai, and to the gates of Ekron. The wounded of the Philistines fell down by the way to Shaaraim, even to Gath, and to Ekron.

1SAMUEL 17: 53 The children of Israel returned from chasing after the Philistines, and they plundered their camp.

1SAMUEL 17: 54 David took the head of the Philistine, and brought it to Jerusalem; but he put his armour in his tent.

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#### Verse 54

David took the head of the Philistine - It has been already remarked that this, with the following verses, and the five first verses of the eighteenth chapter, are omitted by the Septuagint. See the observations at the end, 1Sam 17:58 (note).

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1SAMUEL 17: 55 When Saul saw David go out against the Philistine, he said to Abner, the captain of the army, "Abner, whose son is this youth?" Abner said, "As your soul lives, O king, I can't tell."

1SAMUEL 17: 56 The king said, "Inquire whose son the young man is!"

1SAMUEL 17: 57 As David returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, Abner took him, and brought him before Saul with the head of the Philistine in his hand.

1SAMUEL 17: 58 Saul said to him, "Whose son are you, you young man?" David answered, "I am the son of your servant Jesse the Bethlehemite."

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#### Verse 58

Whose son art thou, thou young man? - That Saul should not know David with whom he had treated a little before, and even armed him for the combat, and that he should not know who his father was, though he had sent to his father for permission to David to reside constantly with him, (1Sam 16:22), is exceedingly strange! I fear all Bishop Warburton's attempts to rectify the chronology by assumed anticipations, will not account for this. I must honestly confess they do not satisfy me; and I must refer the reader to what immediately follows on the authenticity of the verses which concern this subject.

On the subject of that large omission in the Septuagint of which I have spoken on 1Sam 17:12, I here subjoin the reasons of Mr. Pilkington and Dr. Kennicott for supposing it to be an interpolation of some rabbinical writer, added at a very early period to the Hebrew text. "Had every version of the Hebrew text," says Mr. Pilkington, "agreed to give a translation of this passage, as we now find, the attempts of clearing it from its embarrassments would have been attended with very great difficulties; but, as in several other cases before mentioned, so here, the providence of God seems to

have so far secured the credit of those who were appointed to be the penmen of the oracles of truth, that the defense of their original records may be undertaken upon good grounds, and supported by sufficient evidence. For we are now happily in possession of an ancient version of these two chapters, which appears to have been made from a Hebrew copy, which had none of the thirty-nine verses which are here supposed to have been interpolated, nor was similar to what we have at present in those places which are here supposed to have been altered. This version is found in the Vatican copy of the Seventy, which whoever reads and considers, will find the accounts there given regular, consistent, and probable. It will be proper, therefore, to examine the several parts where such alterations are supposed to have been made in the Hebrew text, in order to produce such other external or internal evidence, as shall be necessary to support the charge of interpolation, which ought not to be laid merely upon the authority of any single version. "The first passage, which is not translated in the Vatican copy of the Greek version, is from the 11th to the 32d verse of the 17th chapter wherein we have an account:

1. Of David's being sent to the camp to visit his brethren.
2. Of his conversation with the men of Israel, relating to Goliath's challenge; and their informing him of the premium Saul had offered to any one that should accept it, and come off victorious.
3. Of Eliab's remarkable behavior to his brother David, upon his making this inquiry. And,
4. Of Saul's being made acquainted with what David had said upon this occasion. "It is obvious to remark upon this passage: - "1. That, after David had been of so much service to the king, in causing the evil spirit to depart from him; after its being recorded how greatly Saul loved him, and that he had made him his armor-bearer; after the king had sent to Jesse to signify his intention of keeping his son with him; all of which are particularly mentioned in the latter part of the preceding chapter; the account of his keeping his father's sheep afterwards, and being sent to his brethren upon this occasion, must appear to be somewhat improbable.
2. That what is here said of the premium that Saul had offered to him who should conquer the Philistine, is not well consistent with the accounts afterwards given, of which we shall have occasion to take particular notice.
3. That Eliab's behavior, as here represented, is not only remarkable but unaccountable and absurd. And,
4. That the inquiries of a young man, who is not said to have declared any intentions of accepting the challenge of the Philistine, would scarcely have been related to the king.

But now, if this passage be supposed to have been interpolated, we must see how the connection stands upon its being omitted." "1Sam 17:11. 'When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed, and greatly afraid.' "1Sam 17:32. 'Then David said unto Saul, Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine.' "No connection can be more proper, and in this view David is represented as being at that time an attendant upon the king; and when we had been told just before, (1Sam 16:21), that Saul had made him his armor-bearer, we might justly expect to find him with him when the battle was set in array; 1Sam 17:2. In this connection David is also represented as fully answering the character before given of him: 'A mighty valiant man, and a man of war,' 1Sam 16:18, and ready to fight with the giant upon the first proposal, (for the account of the Philistine presenting himself forty days is in this passage here supposed to have been interpolated, 1Sam 17:16). I shall leave it to the critical Hebrew reader to make what particular remarks he may think proper in respect to the style and manner of expression

in these twenty verses, and let Jesse go for an old man amongst men in the days of Saul, etc." - Pilkington's Remarks upon several Passages of Scripture, p. 62. "The authorities," says Dr. Kennicott, "here brought to prove this great interpolation are the internal evidence arising from the context, and the external arising from the Vatican copy of the Greek version. But how then reads the Alexandrian MS.? The remarks acknowledge that this MS. agrees here with the corrupted Hebrew; and therefore was probably translated, in this part, from some late Hebrew copy which had thus been interpolated; see pages 72, 75. Now that these two MSS. do contain different readings in some places, I observed in pages 398-404, and 414. And in this 17th chapter of Samuel, 1Sam 17:4, the Alexandrian MS. says, agreeably to the present Hebrew, that the height of Goliath was six cubits and a span, i.e., above eleven feet; but the Vatican MS., agreeably to Josephus, that it was four cubits and a span, i.e., near eight feet. And in 1Sam 17:43, what the Vatican renders he cursed David by his gods, the Alexandrian renders by his idols. But though the Hebrew text might be consulted and a few words differently rendered by the transcriber of one of these MSS., or by the transcribers of the MSS. from which these MSS. were taken; yet, as these MSS. do contain, in this chapter, such Greek as is almost universally the same, (in verb, noun, and particle), I presume that they contain here the same translation with the designed alteration of a few words, and with the difference of the interpolated verses found in the Alexandrian MS. "But, after all, what if the Alexandrian MS., which now has these verses should itself prove them interpolated? What if the very words of this very MS. demonstrate that these verses were not in some former Greek MS.? Certainly if the Alexandrian MS. should be thus found, at last, not to contradict, but to confirm the Vatican in its omission of these twenty verses, the concurrence of these authorities will render the argument much more forcible and convincing. "Let us then state the present question; which is, Whether the twenty verses between 1Sam 17:11 and 1Sam 17:32, which are now in the Hebrew text, are interpolated? The Vatican MS. goes on immediately from the end of the 11th verse (και εφοβηθησαν σφοδρα) to 1Sam 17:32, which begins και ειπε Δαυιδ: whereas the 12th verse in the Hebrew begins, not with a speech, but with David's birth and parentage. If then the Alexandrian MS. begins its present 12th verse as the 32d verse begins, and as the 12th verse could not begin properly, I appeal to any man of judgment whether the transcriber was not certainly copying from a MS. in which the 32d verse succeeded the 11th verse; and if so, then from a MS. which had not these intermediate verses? Now that this is the fact, the case will at once appear upon examining the Alexandrian copy, where the 12th verse begins with ΚΑΙ ΕΙΠΕ ΔΑΥΙΔ; as the 32d verse begins, and as the 12th verse could not begin properly. "The case seems clearly to be, that the transcriber, having wrote what is now in the 11th verse, was beginning what is now the 32d verse; when, after writing και ειπε Δαυιδ, he perceived that either the Hebrew, or some other Greek copy, or the margin of his own copy, had several intermediate verses: upon which, without blotting out the significant word ΕΙΠΕ, he goes on to write the addition: thus fortunately leaving a decisive proof of his own great interpolation. if this addition was in the margin of that MS. from which the Alexandrian was transcribed, it might be inserted by that transcriber; but if it was inserted either from the Hebrew, or from any other Greek copy, the transcriber of this MS. seems to have had too little learning for such a proceeding. If it was done by the writer of that former MS., then the interpolation may be a hundred or a hundred and fifty years older than the Alexandrian MS. Perhaps the earliest Christian writer who enlarges upon the strong circumstance of David's coming from the sheep to the army, is Chrysostom, in his homily upon David and Saul; so that it had then been long in some copies of the Greek version. The truth seems to be, that the addition of these twenty verses took its first rise from what Josephus had inserted in his variation and embellishment of this history; but that many circumstances were afterwards added to his additions. "For (and it is extremely remarkable) though Josephus has some, he has not half the improbabilities which are found at present in the sacred history: as for instance: Nothing of the armies being fighting in the valley, or fighting at all, when David was sent by his

father, as in 1Sam 17:19. Nothing of the host going forth, and shouting for the battle, at the time of David's arrival, as in 1Sam 17:20. Nothing of all the men of Israel fleeing from Goliath, as in 1Sam 17:24; on the contrary, the two armies, (it should seem), continued upon their two mountains. Nothing of David's long conversation with the soldiers, 1Sam 17:25-27, in seasons so very improper, as, whilst they were shouting for the battle, or whilst they were fleeing from Goliath; and fleeing from a man after they had seen him and heard him twice in every day for forty days together, 1Sam 17:16, the two armies, all this long while, leaning upon their arms, and looking very peaceably at one another. Nothing of Goliath's repeating his challenge every morning and every evening, as in 1Sam 17:16. David, (it is said, 1Sam 17:23), happened to hear one of these challenges; but if he heard the evening challenge, it would have been then too late for the several transactions before, and the long pursuit after, Goliath's death; and David could not well hear the morning challenge, because he could scarce have arrived so early, after travelling from Beth-lehem to the army, (about fifteen miles), and bringing with him an ephah of parched corn, and ten loaves, and ten cheeses, as in 1Sam 17:17, 1Sam 17:18. Nothing of encouraging any man to fight Goliath, by an offer of the king's daughter, 1Sam 17:25; which, as it seems from the subsequent history, had never been thought of; and which, had it been offered, would probably have been accepted by some man or other out of the whole army. Nothing of Eliab's reprimanding David for coming to see the battle, as in 1Sam 17:28; but for a very different reason; and, indeed, it is highly improbable that Eliab should treat him at all with contempt and scurrility, after having seen Samuel anoint him for the future king of Israel, see 1Sam 16:1-13. Nothing of a second conversation between David and the soldiers, as in 1Sam 17:30, 1Sam 17:31. Nothing of Saul and Abner's not knowing who was David's father, at the time of his going forth against the Philistine, as in 1Sam 17:55. Nothing of David's being introduced to the king by Abner, in form, after killing the Philistine, 1Sam 17:57, at a time when the king and the captain of the host had no leisure for complemental ceremony; but were set out, 1Sam 17:57, in immediate and full pursuit of the Philistines. Nor, lastly, is any notice taken here by Josephus of what now begins the 18th chapter, Jonathan's friendship for David, which is related elsewhere, and in a different manner; on the contrary, as soon as Josephus has mentioned Goliath's death, and told us that Saul and all Israel shouted, and fell at once upon the Philistines, and that, when the pursuit was ended, the head of Goliath was carried by David into his own tent, (and he could have then no tent of his own if he had not been then an officer in the army): I say, as soon as Josephus has recorded these circumstances, he goes on to Saul's envy and hatred of David, arising from the women's songs of congratulation; exactly as these capital parts of the history are connected in the Vatican MS. And with this circumstance I shall conclude these remarks; earnestly recommending the whole to the learned reader's attentive examination. "It must not however be forgot, that the learned F. Houbigant has, in his Bible, placed these twenty verses (from the 11th to the 32d) between hooks, as containing a passage which comes in very improperly. "If it be inquired as to this interpolation in Samuel, when it could possibly be introduced into the text? It may be observed that, about the time of Josephus, the Jews seem to have been fond of enlarging and, as they vainly thought, embellishing the sacred history, by inventing speeches, and prayers, and hymns, and also new articles of history, and these of considerable length; witness the several additions to the book of Esther; witness the long story concerning wine, women, and truth, inserted amidst parts of the genuine history of Ezra and Nehemiah, and worked up into what is now called the First Book of Esdras; witness the hymn of the three children in the fiery furnace, added to Daniel; and witness also the many additions in Josephus. Certainly, then, some few remarks might be noted by the Jews, and some few of their historical additions might be inserted in the margin of their Hebrew copies; which might afterwards be taken into the text itself by injudicious transcribers. "The history of David's conquest of the mighty and insulting Philistine is certainly very engaging; and it gives a most amiable description of a brave young man, relying with firm confidence upon the aid of the God of battle against the



blaspheming enemy. It is not therefore very strange that some fanciful rabbin should be particularly struck with the strange circumstances of the Philistines daring to challenge all Israel; and David's cutting off the giant's head with the giant's own sword. And then, finding that Josephus had said that David came from the sheep to the camp, and happened to hear the challenge, the rabbin might think it very natural that David should be indignant against the giant, and talk valorously to the soldiers, and that the soldiers should mightily encourage David; and then, to be sure, this was the most lucky season to introduce the celebrated friendship of Jonathan for David; particularly when, according to these additions, Jonathan had seen Abner leading David in triumph to the king's presence; every one admiring the young hero, as he proudly advanced with the grim head of the Philistine in his hand. So that this multiform addition and fanciful embellishment of the rabbin reminds one of the motley absurdity described by the poet in the famous lines: -

*Humano capiti cervicem pictor equinam*

*Jungere si velit, et varias inducere plasmas, etc.* "The passage supposed to be interpolated here, was in the Hebrew text before the time of Aquila; because there are preserved a few of the differences in those translations of it which were made by Aquila, Theodotion, and Symmachus. These verses, being thus acknowledged at that time, would doubtless be found in such copies as the Jews then declared to be genuine, and which they delivered afterwards to Origen as such. And that Origen did refer to the Jews for such copies as they held genuine, he allows in his epistle to Africanus; for there he speaks of soothing the Jews, in order to get pure copies from them." - Kennicott's Second Dissertation on the Hebrew Text, p. 419.

In the general dissertation which Dr. Kennicott has prefixed to his edition of the Hebrew Bible, he gives additional evidence that the verses in question were not found originally in the Septuagint, and consequently not in the Hebrew copy used for that version. Several MSS. in the royal library at Paris either omit these verses or have them with asterisks or notes of dubiousness. And the collation by Dr. Holmes and his continuators has brought farther proof of the fact. From the whole, there is considerable evidence that these verses were not in the Septuagint in the time of Origen; and if they were not in the MSS. used by Origen, it is very probable they were not in that version at first; and if they were not in the Septuagint at first, it is very probable that they were not in the Hebrew text one hundred and fifty years before Christ; and if not then in the Hebrew text, it is very probable they were not in that text originally. See Dissertation on Gen., p. 9; and Remarks on Select Passages, p. 104.

I have only to remark here, that the historical books of the Old Testament have suffered more by the carelessness or infidelity of transcribers than any other parts of the sacred volume; and of this the two books of Samuel, the two books of Kings, and the two books of Chronicles, give the most decided and unequivocal proofs. Of this also the reader has already had considerable evidence; and he will find this greatly increased as he proceeds.

It seems to me that the Jewish copyists had not the same opinion of the Divine inspiration of those books as they had of those of the law and the prophets; and have therefore made no scruple to insert some of their own traditions, or the glosses of their doctors, in different parts; for as the whole must evidently appear to them as a compilation from their public records, they thought it no harm to make different alterations and additions from popular statements of the same facts, which they found in general circulation. This is notoriously the case in Josephus; this will account, and it does to me very satisfactorily, for many of the various readings now found in the Hebrew text of the historical books. They were held in less reverence, and they were copied with less care, and emended with less critical skill, than the pentateuch and the prophets; and on them the hands of

careless, ignorant, and temerarious scribes, have too frequently been laid. To deny this, only betrays a portion of the same ignorance which was the parent of those disorders; and attempts to blink the question, though they may with some be an argument of zeal, yet with all the sincere and truly enlightened friends of Divine revelation, will be considered to be as dangerous as they are absurd.

Where the rash or ignorant hand of man has fixed a blot on the Divine records, let them who in the providence of God are qualified for the task wipe it off; and while they have the thanks of all honest men, God will have the glory.

There have been many who have affected to deny the existence of giants. There is no doubt that the accounts given of several are either fabulous or greatly exaggerated. But men of an extraordinary size are not uncommon even in our own day: I knew two brothers of the name of Knight, who were born in the same township with myself, who were seven feet six inches high; and another, in the same place, Charles Burns who was eight feet six! These men were well and proportionately made. I have known others of this height, whose limbs were out of all proportion; their knees bent in, and joints rickety.

Ireland, properly speaking, is the only nation on the earth that produces Giants; and let me tell the poor, that this is the only nation in the world that may be said to live on potatoes; with little bread, and less flesh-meat.

I have seen and entertained in my house the famous Polish dwarf, the Count Boruwlaski, who was about thirty-six inches high, every part of whose person was formed with the most perfect and delicate symmetry. The prodigious height and bulk of Charles Burns, and the astonishing diminutiveness of Count Boruwlaski, could not be properly estimated but by comparing both together. Each was a perfect man; and yet, in quantum, how disproportionate! Man is the only creature in whom the extremes of minuteness and magnitude are so apparent, and yet the proportion of the parts in each strictly correlative.