

to forgive the enemy who had so often injured him. This Guthrum did. At his baptism King Alfred was his godfather, and Guthrum was an honourable chief who well deserved that clemency ; for ever afterwards he was loyal and faithful to the King. The Danes under him were faithful, too. They plundered and burned no more, but worked like honest men. They ploughed and sowed and reaped, and lived good, honest English lives. And I hope the children of those Danes played, many a time, with Saxon children in the sunny fields, and that Danish young men fell in love with Saxon girls, and married them, and that English travellers, benighted at the doors of Danish cottages, often went in for shelter until morning ; and that Danes and Saxons sat by the red fire, friends, talking of King Alfred the Great.

All the Danes were not like those under Guthrum ; for, after some years, more of them came over, in the old plundering and burning way—among them a fierce pirate of the name of Hastings, who had the boldness to sail up the Thames to Gravesend, with eighty ships. For three years, there was a war with these Danes ; and there was famine in the country, too, and a plague, both upon human creatures and beasts. But King Alfred, whose mighty heart never failed him, built large ships nevertheless, with which to