

news arrived that the Northmen of Northumbria and East Anglia, with 240 ships, had landed suddenly in Devonshire, and had laid siege to Exeter.

The siege of the island was at once raised, and King Alfred marched against the new arrivals, and advancing with great speed fell upon them and defeated them. Then hastily returning he came to London and, joined by a strong force from Mercia, marched against Milton, where Hasting had been joined by the great number of the Danes who had formed the army in the Weald. Hasting himself was away, but his army marched out to meet the Saxons.

A great battle was fought, but the Danes could not resist the ardour of their assailants. Their army was routed and their fortress stormed. All the booty within it fell into the hands of the victors, together with the wives and families of the Danes, among whom were the wife and two sons of Hasting. The Danish fleet also was captured, and was burned or taken to London. Another great fleet of the East Angles and Northumbrians sailed up the Thames, and landing, the Northmen marched across to the Severn, but were defeated and destroyed by Ethelred of Mercia.

Exeter was again invested by a Danish fleet, and again saved by Alfred. The Danes, as they retired along the south coast, landed near Chichester, where they suffered a heavy defeat from the South Saxons.