

great attempt for vengeance on the Danes, and the deliverance of his oppressed people.

But, first, as it was important to know how numerous those pestilent Danes were, and how they were fortified, King Alfred, being a good musician, disguised himself as a gleeman or minstrel, and went, with his harp, to the Danish Camp. He played and sang in the very tent of Guthrum the Danish leader, and entertained the Danes as they caroused. While he seemed to think of nothing but his music, he was watchful of their tents, their arms, their discipline, everything that he desired to know. And right soon did this great King entertain them to a different tune, for, summoning all his true followers to meet him at an appointed place, where they received him with joyful shouts and tears, as the monarch whom many of them had given up for lost or dead, he set himself at their head, marched on the Danish camp, defeated the Danes with great slaughter and besieged them for fourteen days to prevent their escape. But, being as merciful as he was good and brave, he then, instead of killing them, proposed peace, on condition that they should altogether depart from that part of England, and settle in the East; and that Guthrum should become a Christian, in remembrance of the Divine religion which now taught his conqueror, the noble Alfred,