

longer stay in East Anglia, which I see is destined to fall piecemeal into the hands of the Danes; but we will journey down to Somerset, and I will pray King Ethelbert to assign me lands there, and to take me as his thane."

While they had been thus talking Egbert had been broiling the eels and wild ducks over the fire. He was a freeman, and a distant relation of Edmund's father, Eldred, who was an ealdorman in West Norfolk, his lands lying beyond Thetford, and upon whom, therefore, the first brunt of the Danish invasion from Mercia had fallen. He had made a stout resistance, and assembling his people had given battle to the invaders. These, however, were too strong and numerous, and his force having been scattered and dispersed, he had sought refuge with Egbert and his son in the fen country. Here he had remained for two months in hopes that some general effort would be made to drive back the Danes; but being now convinced that at present the Angles were too disunited to join in a common effort, he determined to retire for a while from the scene.

"I suppose, father," Edmund said, "you will leave your treasures buried here?"

"Yes," his father replied; "we have no means of transporting them, and we can at any time return and fetch them. We must dig up the big chest and take