

STORIES FROM ENGLISH HISTORY.

ALFRED THE GREAT.

ALFRED the Great was a young man, two-and-twenty years of age, when he became king. This great king, in the first year of his reign, fought nine battles with the Danes. He made some treaties with them too, by which the false Danes swore that they would quit the country. They pretended to consider that they had taken a very solemn oath, in swearing this upon the holy bracelets that they wore, and which were always buried with them when they died; but they cared little for it, for they thought nothing of breaking oaths and treaties too, as soon as it suited their purpose, and coming back to fight, plunder and burn, as usual. One fatal winter, in the fourth year of King Alfred's reign, they spread themselves in great numbers over the whole of England; and so dispersed and routed the King's soldiers that the King was left alone, and was obliged to disguise himself as a common peasant, and to take refuge in the cottage of one of his cowherds who did not know his face.

Here, King Alfred, while the Danes sought him far and wide was left alone one day, by the cowherd's wife, to watch some cakes which she