

side of you and Egbert on the other. I have thought over many things of late, and it seems to me that we Saxons have done harm in holding the people of this country as serfs."

"Why, father," Edmund exclaimed in astonishment, "surely you would not have all men free and equal."

"The idea seems strange to you, no doubt, Edmund, and it appears only natural that some men should be born to rule and others to labour, but this might be so even without serfdom, since, as you know, the poorer freemen labour just as do the serfs, only they receive a somewhat larger guerdon for their toil; but had the two races mixed more closely together, had serfdom been abolished and all men been free and capable of bearing arms, we should have been able to show a far better front to the Danes, seeing that the serfs are as three to one to the freemen."

"But the serfs are cowardly and spiritless," Edmund said; "they are not of a fighting race, and fell almost without resistance before our ancestors when they landed here."

"Their race is no doubt inferior to our own, Edmund," his father said, "seeing that they are neither so tall nor so strong as we Saxons, but of old they were not deficient in bravery, for they fought as stoutly against the Romans as did our own hardy ancestors. After having been for hundreds of years subject to the