

in making good laws, and in teaching the English how to keep away the Danes from their country. He allowed himself very little time indeed for sleeping, eating, and walking about.

One of the very best things King Alfred did for England, was to build a great many ships. He wisely thought that the best means of keeping away the Danes, or any other enemy that could reach England by sea, was to have ships as good as theirs, and go and meet them on the water, and fight them there, instead of allowing them to land and do mischief, and carry away the goods, and sometimes even the children of the people on the sea-coast; so he built more than a hundred vessels, and he was the first king of England who had good ships of his own.

Besides fighting the Danes, Alfred made other good uses of his ships. He sent some to Italy and France, to get books, and many things that the English did not then know how to make at home. And other vessels he sent to distant countries, even as far as Russia, to see what the people were like, and if they had anything in their country that it would be useful to England to buy. I have read an account of one of the voyages made by a friend of Alfred's, which the king wrote himself, after his friend had told him what he had seen, and when you are old enough to read it, I dare say it will please you as much as it pleases me.

This good King Alfred died when he had been king twenty-nine years. He was ill for a long time before he died, but he was very patient, and bore great pain without complaining. Just before he died he spoke to his son Edward, and gave him good advice about taking care of the people when he came to be king.