What important thing did King Alfred learn when he penetrated the Danish camp of Guthrum?

Alfred the Great acted as his spy, visiting Danish camps disguised as a minstrel.

In those days, wandering minstrels were welcome everywhere.

They were not fighting men, and their harp was their passport.

Alfred had learned many of their ballads in his youth and could vary his program with acrobatic tricks and simple conjuring.

While Alfred’s little army slowly began to gather at Athelney, the king himself set out to penetrate the camp of Guthrum, the commander of the Danish invaders.

These had settled down for the winter at Chippenham: thither Alfred went.

He noticed at once that discipline was slack: the Danes had the self-confidence of conquerors, and their security precautions were casual.

They lived well, on the proceeds of raids on neighboring regions.

There, they collected women as well as food and drink, and a life of ease had made them soft.

Alfred stayed in the camp for a week before he returned to Athelney.

The force they assembled was trivial compared with the Danish horde.

But Alfred had deduced that the Danes were no longer fit for prolonged battle and that their commissariat had no organization, but depended on irregular raids.

So, faced with the Danish advance, Alfred did not risk open battle but harried the enemy.

He was constantly on the move, drawing the Danes after him.

His patrols halted the raiding parties: hunger assailed the Danish army.

Now Alfred began a long series of skirmishes, and within a month the Danes had surrendered.

The episode could reasonably serve as a unique epic of royal espionage!

It was easy for Alfred the Great to penetrate the Danish camp because, at the time, minstrels were welcome everywhere and because the Danes’ security precautions were so casual.

Alfred defeated the Danes, not by engaging them in open battle, but by harrying them, halting raiding parties and leading skirmishes against them over the period of a month until they finally surrendered.

Image 1:

The robber entered the bank disguised as a security guard.

I watched the ants as they ran hither and thither in the garden.

The supervision of the children seemed to be very slack; they could all do whatever they wanted.

If the security precautions at the theatre had been better, the pop star would not have been attacked.

The singer promised to give all the proceeds from his biggest concert to charity.

The amount of money he earns is trivial compared with the large number of debts he has.

The troops harried the enemy’s positions for a week.

The man was constantly assailed by worries.

Apart from the main battle, there were lots of skirmishes between small groups of soldiers in the nearby hills.

Everyone has his or her unique fingerprints.

In Alfred’s time, it was easy for a minstrel to gain access to an enemy camp.

Guthrum was the place where the Danish invaders had their camp.

Alfred defeated the Danes because he had a large army.

During the English attack, the Danes found it difficult to obtain food.

There were many people present at the reception.

I haven’t got many books.

I haven’t brought much luggage with me.

Much of the machinery in this factory is out of date.

Many of the shops in this area close on Wednesday afternoon.

He broke his right arm as well as his right leg.

As well as writing novels, she also writes plays for television.

No one called while you were out.

Did you go anywhere last night?

Haven’t you got anything to do?

He said he knew nothing about it.

I don’t know anyone by that name.

I love wandering around second-hand bookshops.

I’m wondering if we’ve made a mistake here.

I learned to knit when I was eight.

Who taught you how to knit?

She noticed that several students seemed restless that morning.

He remarked, ‘You look beautiful today.’

Military victories were celebrated by parading the defeated chiefs and princes in the streets of Rome, in a display of submission to their conquerors.

The Oxford team were the winners in last year’s Oxford and Cambridge Boat Race.

The captain called together a small force of hand-picked men.

The door was opened by force.

You need a great deal of strength to be a weightlifter.

The force of the strength of the wind was so great that the roof was blown off.

Have you settled your account yet?

They settled in Australia before the war.

It’s time we settled this question.

He settled all his property on his wife.

The Danes had the self-confidence of conquerors.

The Danes were no longer fit for a prolonged battle.

She is an extremely good public speaker with a great deal of *self-assurance*.

Monks and nuns have to practice *self-denial* by giving up life’s pleasures.

Many countries in the world that used to be governed by London as part of the British Empire are now independent *self-governing* states.

She is a very *self-centered* person: she only ever thinks of herself.

Does that coat fit you?

I can’t fit all these clothes into this suitcase.

He may win the race today. He’s extremely fit and in good form.

He wrote that book in a sudden fit of energy.

It’s a good idea, but it doesn’t fit in with our plans.