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A STRIKING SCENE.

I want you to go back this week a very long time for a story, and to a different country from our own.

Between the years 1017 and 1033 there was a king in Norway whose name was Olaf. He was a Christian, and keenly anxious that the people over whom he ruled should be Christians, too. He was known after his death as "King Olaf the Holy," or "St. Olaf," or again, "Olaf, King, and Martyr." What had he done to deserve all these high-sounding titles?

Most likely if he had lived in these days we should not have considered him worthy of any title because of his rough ways; but nine hundred years have made a great difference in our thoughts as to what is the sign of real goodness.

I can only give you a very brief outline of Olaf's works; and, indeed, it is mainly just one that I want you to know.

At the time Olaf came to Norway the people were not only heathens, but had a most bitter hatred towards Christians and their faith. The reason of this was that there had been kings before Olaf's time, who had tried to force them to give up the worship of Odin, and all their other gods, and become Christians. And, like people in these days, they did not like to be forced into any new belief.

Now, Olaf was himself a Christian. He had travelled in many lands, and had seen what Christianity had done for other nations. Then in a German port he became acquainted with a soldier-priest, named Thrangbrand. He was first attracted to this man by a large shield which he carried, having on it a figure of our Lord on the cross embossed in gold. As Olaf was so much pleased with this shield, Thrangbrand made him a present of it. But in return Olaf loaded him with silver and gold.

It was unfortunate that Olaf took his newly-made friend into Norway with him, for he urged upon the king exactly the same plan which had been tried before, and which made the people hate Christianity. War followed upon war, and punishments of all kinds were meted out for those who would not comply with the king's wishes. So little had they learned the love and gentleness which ought always to mark Christians.

Now on one occasion, the king had heard that in the Province of Dalen the chief man, who was named Gudbrand, was determined to oppose the king, and so had gathered a large force to meet him in battle. When Olaf saw this, he set his men in order, but before they struck a stroke or sent an arrow, the king himself rode to the front, and besought them to give up their evil ways and become Christians.

Their answer was fierce. "We will give thee other work to do to-day than to mock us." And then they

sent up a mighty shout, and struck their shields with their spears.

Then the battle began, but the king's forces made short work of the raw country recruits. Gudbrand's son was taken prisoner, and many of the people were slain.

Two or three nights after this Gudbrand had a dream which filled him with terror. A man came to him in shining garments, and said: "Thy son went not on a path of victory, but far worse wilt thou fare if thou dost venture again to oppose the king; thou and all thy people shall fall, so that ye shall be food for ravens and wolves."

When Gudbrand arose in the morning he told his dream to one of his chief men, and he answered: "The very same vision came to me." Then they were sore afraid, and agreed to ask the king for a conference, and

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to this the king agreed. The evening before the conference, Olaf asked Gudbrand's son how their god was fashioned. He answered that he was made to represent Thor, with a hammer in his hand, that he was very tall and hollow within, that he stood on a pedestal, and his dress was richly ornamented with silver and gold. All that night did the king spend in prayer.

On the morrow, at dawn of day, the king went to receive the Holy Communion at the hands of a Bishop he had brought; then after the service the two went to meet the people, and the Bishop told the people of the character of the Holy God, and of the many wonders He had wrought in answer to the prayers of His people.

Then spoke up a noble, Thord, and said: "Plenty of words hast thou; to-morrow we will meet again, and let us then see a sign—let it be bright sunshine."

Now, there was a man on the king's side who was remarkable for the greatness of his strength. He was a guard, and his name was Colbein. And the king said to him: "When we meet to-morrow, stand near to me, and do my bidding."

Again, the king spent long hours in prayer, and in the morning he went out to meet the people, and as he looked he saw an immense multitude coming towards the place of meeting, bearing with them a large image, glittering with gold and silver. This image they placed so that it should be between the two parties.

Then Gudbrand stood up and said: "Now, O king, where is the God of whom thou dost speak? Here is ours whom all can see, a god so terrible that every heart is filled with fear at the sight of him."

Then the king spoke softly to Colbein, and said: "If it so chance that the people look away from their idol, do thou smite him with thy club; give the strongest blow thou didst ever strike."

Then the king turned to the people, and said: "You threaten us with your deaf and blind god, but lift up your eyes towards heaven, and see how our God shows Himself

in the radiant light." And even as Olaf spoke, the sunlight burst through the clouds, and the people were lost in wonder and fear.

Colbein, taking advantage of this distraction, raised his heavy club, and gave the idol such a blow that it broke in two, and from out the hollow stump came rats and vipers and snakes.

Then stood up Gudbrand, and said before all the people: "Truly, our god, Thor, is worth little, if he cannot defend even himself."

From this time opposition to the Christian religion ceased, and the king sent for good men to come and teach his people. And thus Christianity became the religion of Norway.

We may not like the king's methods in which he went to work, but in his own way he did all the good he could, and it produced great results.

And Advent, on which we are just entering, says to us that we, too, are to do all the good we can, and make our Lord Christ the Ruler of men, and women, and children. Just try in your own way to make England a Christian country, as Olaf the king tried to make his country Christian, and you will do much.—Uncle Harry.

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