

hearts. It is a new departure in Norway, that her Kings should offer themselves under the laws like common men; and yet it seems not unfair to us that you should do so. The laws declare that for the shedding of blood the relatives of the dead man may claim the life of the slayer, or they may claim a scat in lands or goods. Now, King Olaf, Ironbeard has left no family save a daughter, who has no lack of wealth and is of good family. We, therefore, her relatives, lay this judgment upon you: that you make her your lawful wife and bestow upon her lands befitting her position as Queen."

The King's men uttered a growl of protest, even Sigurd looking somewhat blank, for the King had thought of marrying one of the daughters of the Swedish King, to make an alliance between the two nations. Olaf, however, checked the murmur with a gesture, and replied to the bonders:

"My friends, this is a lawful judgment, and I accept it with good will. I will expect you two men to look to it that the maid is sent to Nidaros before Eastertide, at which time I shall marry her and make her the Queen of this land. It is the least I can do, methinks, after my men have killed her father and left her alone in the world. Should this plan not meet with her consent, I will expect you to appoint other penalty, which I will fulfill most faithfully, and this I swear on the Cross."

Olaf sat down amid a shout of approval and joy from the bonders, and a dozen men rose at once to speak. Making one of their number spokesman, he addressed the King.

"My lord, when I left home it was my firm intention to resist your faith to the last drop of my blood; but now I am proud to take baptism from your hands, and to swear anew my allegiance to you."

Olaf started up in surprise, and one by one the other bonders rose and declared their intention to be baptized. Then Olaf

sent for Bishop Sigurd, whom he had left at the ships, fearing that Ironbeard might attack him, and turned to the bonders.

"My people, nothing that you could do would give me more pleasure than this thing. It is the dearest wish of my heart that this land of Norway should become Christian, and once you and the other leaders of Thrandheim and the districts around have received baptism, we will meet with little opposition from the rest of the land. In pledge of your earnestness I ask that you complete the destruction of this your temple to the old gods, and on its site I will erect at my own expense a church to the true God."

Shouting and clashing their arms, the bonders sprang up without an instant's hesitation. They ran to the temple, carried out the broken images, and piled them in the snow, while others stripped the temple of its furnishings and set fire to it. As the pile of idols broke into flame, old Bishop Sigurd arrived from the ships.

He had been told the whole story on the way up the hill, and he gripped Olaf's hand silently but heartily as the King met him. At once the work of baptism was begun, Sigurd and the rest of the King's men taking part in the service, and standing as god-fathers to the new converts.

When this was finished the afternoon was nearly spent, and after arranging with the leaders of the people for the building of a church, for the burial of Ironbeard, and for the sending of his daughter Gudrun to Nidaros at Easter, Olaf's men embarked, and the King sailed back down the Firth to Nidaros.

A few days before this the Firth had opened, for although it was still winter, the weather had warmed somewhat, and a channel had been made from above Moeri to the open sea. When the fleet came to the harbor that night, they found the town alight with torches, and lying in the harbor were several newly arrived ships, or rather