

FOR THE WHITE CHRIST

bent while the priest implored the blessing of Heaven upon the soul of the outlaw.

But Olvir, passing slowly from the doorway along the shadowy corridor, felt a hand thrust out from another curtained entrance to draw him within. Still half dazed, he yielded to the grasp. The hangings fell to behind him, and he found himself face to face with the queen. For a little they stood staring at each other, the queen's face still and cold as a mask. Olvir looked quietly into her dilating eyes, and then, without a word, he turned to go. But Fastrada put out the hand on which glowed her magic opal, and caught his shoulder in an eager grasp.

"Stay, Olvir!" she said. "Give heed, and learn that all is not lost to you."

"The king has spoken, witch's daughter."

"But not the queen. Listen, my gerfalcon. The famished bird wings back to the wrist of its keeper; the well-lashed steed comes to the call of the master. Your spirit is broken, proud Dane, and now my vengeance is slaked. There is gall in the cup. I wish to drink of a sweeter draught, which you shall give at my asking; for in my hand I hold for you good fortune,—honors and riches and power; the king's friendship again for his Dane hawk."

"And the price, werwolf?"

"Take heed of your tongue, Olvir! I have yet a score to settle with your puling nun-bride."

"She has another knife —"

"Take joy of the thought! Listen to me: I offer for her so much as the veil, and that at Chelles, where she will be with Gisela. Weigh it well, Olvir; on the one hand, peace for her; on the other, the knife — or Worad."

"The price?"

A deep blush suffused the queen's cheeks, and her eyes,