

Skule. No, Bishop Nicholas; in this matter we needed the voice of God.

Haakon (*deeply moved, and holding INGA by the hand*). So now the deed is done against which every fibre in my being cried out aloud—the thought of which wrung my heart with anguish—

Dagfinn (*to the crowd*). Yes, look upon this woman and then think well, all you who are here! Who was there that doubted her word until certain men found it to their interest that it should be doubted?

Paul Flida. The doubt has been whispered in every corner since the hour when Haakon, heir to the crown, was carried as a child into King Inge's halls.

Gregorius Jonsson. And last winter the whisper grew into a clamour and resounded throughout the land, from north to south. To that I think every man can bear witness.

Haakon. I myself best of all. And it was for that reason that I gave way to the counsel of many faithful friends, and humbled myself as no other king-elect has done for many a day. By the Ordeal of the Iron I have proved my birth, and proved my right, as the son of Haakon, son of Sverre, to inherit the kingship of this land. It is not my purpose now to inquire more closely who was the begetter of this doubt and proclaimed it with so loud a voice as Earl Skule's friends say; but this I do know, that bitterly have I suffered under it. King-elect I have been ever since I was a child; but little has been the kingly honour that I have received, even at the hands of those from whom one would think I could most surely expect it. I will only remind you of what took place last Palm Sunday at Nidaros,¹ when I went up to the altar to make my offering and the Archbishop turned away and made as though he had not seen me, so as to avoid saluting me as men are wont to salute kings. Still, it would have been easy to put up with such slights as that, had it not been that the country was on the brink of an outbreak of civil war, and my duty was to prevent that.

Dagfinn. No doubt it is well for kings to listen to

¹ The ancient name of Trondhjem.