

## FOR THE WHITE CHRIST

You tear at my very heart-strings. How can I send my child into the frozen North?"

"Not all is rime and frost with us, lord king. The summer is fair in our North land, and the Trondir are warm of heart. In time, I shall sit on the high-seat of my father. The king's daughter shall not lack either in honor or in love."

"I will gladly give you whatever else you ask, Olvir. But to part with my child —"

Gently Olvir put Rothada from him, and half turned. He spoke with the calm of utter despair: "It would seem the Norns have woven ill for me. I go into the North, and — I go without my bride."

"Ah, no!" gasped Fastrada. Struggling to her feet, she tore from about her throat the necklace of sapphires which the Northman had given her for wedding gift, and pressed it upon Rothada. "Take it, king's daughter; take it — even that! — only, bid him stay!"

Rothada thrust the blue stones from her, and drew herself up with a haughtiness which the king, her father, had never equalled. There was no grief in her white face as she made answer: "Am I such a one as you that I should bid my hero bend his will? He goes —"

"And you go with him!" The words burst from Karl's lips like a cry of anguish.

For a moment, Olvir stood as though dazed; then Rothada was locked fast in his arms. "My bride! Joy is ours, king's daughter!"

To them sprang their friends, with glad words, — Liutrad, Gerold, even the calm scholar Alcuin. In the midst, Olvir thrust them aside with friendly force, and Rothada and he stood forward, radiant, to return thanks to the great king.