

leaders, "we must lose no time, for, see, they are cutting the ships out of the ice!"

So, leading the way, he dashed over the rocks of the shore, and as the first shouts of alarm went up from the heathen army, Olaf and part of his men stood between them and their ships, while over the brow of the hill poured the remainder of his forces.

The rebel camp seethed and boiled with men, but seeing that Olaf made no move to attack them, their haste quieted somewhat, and in a few minutes two well-appareled chiefs left the tents and with a dozen men approached the King.

"Have we safe conduct, King Olaf?" shouted one.

"Have no fear," replied Olaf, "come in peace."

As they approached, men who knew them whispered to the King that these were Raud the Strong and Thori Hart. Both were of lofty stature and magnificently built, with strong, vigorous features. They stopped a dozen paces from the King.

"From your appearance you are Olaf Triggveson," said one. "I am Raud the Strong, and this is Thori Hart. Have you come in peace or in war, oh, King?"

A smile ran around Olaf's men, and he himself laughed outright.

"That is a strange question, Raud, when you have attacked my people and declared your intention of driving me from the land!"

The other two flushed, and Raud's face darkened. "You have caught me," he cried angrily, "by fault of the Ice King, where my men can ill defend themselves, and I see that you have many more warriors than I looked for; yet you will not find me the last to cross swords with you, Olaf!"

"Hold, Raud," answered Olaf, "I mean not to attack you. Now see, I have your ships yonder, I have a much larger force than you, and yet if you will not yield willingly to me you shall depart in peace to your homes, on condition simply that you

abandon the revolt against my rule."

"Why," cried Thori Hart in wonder, "we thought that you made choice of the Cross or the sword to your subjects! Mean you that we will not be forced to baptism?"

Olaf smiled sadly. "You will not, Thori. All the chiefs in the Thrandheim districts have been baptized, but willingly, as those with me here can testify. Now, what is your decision?"

The two whispered together for a minute, until finally Raud spoke up, advancing toward the King.

"You have fairly overcome us, King Olaf, and we thank you for our lives. Still, I am not ready to accept your faith. I am a great priest of Thor in the north, and you seem to be the champion of the White Christ, so I propose that you and I pray to our gods, and after that we indulge in a wrestling match. The winner, he who first throws the other to earth, shall bestow his faith on all the men of the loser. This Thori and I agree to, if you will also."

Olaf, without hesitation, replied, "I will accept the trial, here and now, trusting to the mercy of Almighty God that he will nerve my arm against your power and that of your false gods!"

"But one condition I would make, Raud; that is, that whoever loses this contest shall forfeit his life with it."

The viking joyfully agreed, and then returned to his camp. The men of King Olaf had all arrived, and as word of the challenge passed through the army, more than one covert smile was seen, for already men said that Olaf was the strongest man in all the land.

It was so bitterly cold that a great fire was built, and on one side of the space, scraped clear of snow, marked out for the match, grouped Olaf's men; on the other side the heathen followers of Raud stood, full of confidence in their leader, for he was very strong, whence his name, and skilled in wrestling.