

ships, bearing more fugitives, came down the coast, and gave Olaf the news that Raud and Thori were only fifteen miles to the north, that they had landed at Theksdale, and were summoning men to join them from all the country.

That afternoon the reinforcements came up from Nidaros, and the King held a council on his ship the "Crane."

"First," he said, "I am resolved that if it can possibly be avoided there shall be no bloodshed in this matter. Now let me have your council on how we shall act to gain these rebels over, if that can be done."

Sigurd spoke first. "It may be that you did not note it, King Olaf, but old Biorn, my forecastle man, is strongly of the opinion that to-night a heavy frost will set in. This warm weather has not been natural at all; even this afternoon the sun has been growing somewhat colder.

"Now, if a frost returns to-night, it will be no light one, and Biorn says that the Firth will again be closed to us. In this case, it seems to me that any ships lying along the shore would be frozen fast, especially if they were in such a narrow bay as that at Theksdale. I think that Raud and Thori will give little heed to their ships, drawing them on shore carelessly, or perhaps anchoring them near by; and if this is the case, and we come upon them suddenly, they will probably be so disheartened at the loss of their ships, and at being left so far from home without means of retreat, that they will give in."

A cry of delight broke from the King and the others. "That is the very solution of it!" exclaimed Olaf. "But—it depends on whether or not a frost sets in. In any case we will leave the land, so as not to be frozen in ourselves."

The chiefs separated to their respective vessels, and all sailed out two or three miles to sea, where they lay tossing quietly. At sunset Bishop Sigurd, who was aboard the "Crane," conducted a solemn service, dur-

ing which he offered a solemn prayer that God would favor their enterprise; as the men on all the ships joined in the responses, it seemed to Sigurd Fairhair that never had he witnessed a more impressive sight than this. Eighteen ships, all crowded with men, a large portion of whom had only a few days before been worshipers of idols, lay grouped together in the sunset glow, while from them arose a devout and heartfelt prayer to the White Christ.

No sooner had the sun set and darkness fallen upon the ocean, than the night turned bitterly cold. Many of the men, not expecting this, had left off their furs and cloaks, so that the others divided theirs among all. In some of the ships were bales of merchandise, and at the King's order these were opened by torchlight and all the men without cloaks were furnished with them.

By midnight it was evident that the intense cold would close the Firth, and as Sigurd had foreseen, would also hold the enemy helpless. Amid a shout of rejoicing from all the men, the prows were turned north, and the ships rowed swiftly toward Theksdale, for there was not a breath of wind, and every minute the cold seemed to increase.

With sunrise the pilots announced that they were not far from their goal, and an hour later they rounded the islands outside Theksdale Bay. There, however, they were stopped by a ragged line of ice, nearly a foot thick, which had formed during the night.

In all haste, for as yet they had not come around the headland into the bay itself, the crews disembarked without mishap, and gained the shore, leaving men on board the ships to keep them safe. They made their way, under guidance of men who knew the coast, across the headland; and there before them lay the army of revolt, their fleet fast-bound in fetters of ice along the shore!

"Come," exclaimed Olaf to his nearest