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## **Illustrations of northern antiquities, from the earlier Teutonic and Scandinavian romances**

**Weber, Henry William**

**Edinburgh [u.a.], 1814**

Stark Tiderich and Olger Danske

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## STARK TIDERICH AND OLGER DANSKE.

TIDERICH of Bern, (*Verona*,) or Theoderic, king of the Ostrogoths, died A. D. 527, in the 34th year of his reign; and the circumstances attending his death were almost as strange and romantic as any that have since been connected with the actions of his life. (Procop. Goth. Hist. B. 1.) Holger, or Olger the Dane, flourished in the days of Charlemagne, nearly three centuries after; and here we have a very hard battle fought between them; a thing which is no-wise surprising, as Olger is well known to the readers of romance, to have eaten of the fruit of the trees of the sun and moon: "And men say tho that kepe tho tres, and eten frewght of hem, they leve cccc. or v<sup>c</sup>. yere." See WEBER's Metrical Romances, vol. III. p. 331.

For a more detailed account of what has been said and sung about him, see "Bartholini Dissertatio de Holgero Dano," in the second volume of Oelrich's "Daniae et Sueciae litteratae opuscula hist. phil. theol. Bremæ, 8vo. 1774," where will also be found a copy of this ballad, which, for lively and strong characteristic painting, has certainly very great merit, and may well bear a comparison with the finest heroic ballad productions of our own country, Chevy Chase itself not excepted; and this is saying much!

STARK TIDERICH

AND

OLGER DANSKE.

TRANSLATED FROM THE DANISH KEMPE VISER, p. 78,

FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1591.

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*Sterk Tidrick boer sig udi Bern,  
Med atten Brødrø giefvø ;  
Kver af dem hafvø Sønner Tolf,  
Stoer Mandom monnø de bedrifvø.  
(Nu stander Striden Norden under Jutland.)*

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STARK Tidrick bides him intill Bern,  
Wi' his bald brithers acht ;  
Twall stalwart sons had they ilk ane,  
O' manhead and great macht.  
(Now the strife it stands northward under Jutland.)

And he had fifteen sisters,  
And twall sons ilk ane had ;  
The youngest she had thirteen ;—  
Their life they downa redd.  
(Now the strife it stands northward under Danmarck.)

Afore the Berners they can stand,  
 Fiel stalwart kempis strang:  
 The sooth to say, they kythit o'er  
 The beech-tree taps sae lang.  
 (*Now the strife, &c.*)

"Now striven hae we for mony a year,  
 Wi' kempis and knightis stark:  
 Sae mickle we hear o' Olger Danske,  
 He bides in Dannemarck.

"This hae we heard o' Olger Danske,—  
 He bides in North Jutland;  
 He's gotten him crown'd wi' red goud,  
 And scorns to be our man."

Up Sverting hent a stang o' steel,  
 And shook it scornfullie:  
 "A hunder o' King Olger's men  
 I wadna reck a flie!"

"Hear thou, Sverting, thou laidly page,  
 Ill sets thee sae to flout;  
 I tell thee King Olger's merry men  
 Are stalwart lads and stout.

"Nae fear for either glaive or sword,<sup>1</sup>  
 Or grounden bolt hae they;  
 The bloody stour's their blythest hour;  
 They count it bairns' play."

This word heard the high Bermeris,  
 And took tent o' the same:  
 "We will ride us till Dannemarck,  
 See an Olger be at hame."

<sup>1</sup> "De frygtè ickè glafvend eller sword."

They drew out o' the Berner's land;  
 Acht thousand strang they were:  
 " King Olger we will visit now,  
 And a' till Danmarck fare."

King Tidrich sent a messenger,  
 Bade him till Olger say:  
 " Whilk will ye loor now stand the stour,  
 Or to us tribute pay?"

Sae grim in mood King Olger grew,  
 Ill could he thole sic taunts:  
 " Thou bid them bide us on the bent;—  
 See wha the payment vaunts!"

" Tribute the Dane to nae man pays,  
 But dane-gelt a' gate faks;  
 And tribute gin ye will hae, ye's hae't  
 Laid loundring on your backs!"

King Olger till his kempis said:  
 " I've selcouth news to tell;  
 Stark Tidrich has sent us a messenger  
 That we maun pay black-mail."

" And he black-mail maun either hae,  
 Or we maun fecht him here;  
 But he is na the first king,  
 Will Danmarck win this year."

Syne till King Tidrich's messenger  
 Up spak that kemp sae stout:  
 " Come the Berners but till Danmarck in,  
 Unceth they'll a' win out."

Sae glad was he then, Ulf of Airn,  
 Whan he that tidings fund;

Sae leugh he, Hero Hogen ;  
And they green'd the stour to stand.

It was Vidrich Verlandsön,<sup>1</sup>  
He grew in mood sae fain ;  
And up and spak he, young Child Orme,  
" We'll ride the Berners foregain."

" The foremaist on the bent I'se be !"  
That said Sir Iver Blae ;  
" Forsuith I'se nae the hindmaist be !"  
Answer'd Sir Kulden Gray.

King Olger and Stark Tiderich,  
They met upon the muir ;  
They laid on load in furious mood,  
And made a fearfu' stour.

They fought ae day ; for three they fought ;<sup>2</sup>  
Neither could win the gree ;  
The manfu' Danes their chieftain ware,  
Nae ane will flinch or flee.

The bluid ran bullering in burns  
Bedown baith hill and dale ;  
Dane-gelt the Berners now maun pay,  
That ween'd to get black-mail.

The yowther drifted sae high i' the sky ;  
The sun worth a' sae red :<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In the Heldenbuch he is called *Wittich Weylandson*. This *Wittich*, or *Vitig*, was married to *Mathasventa*, grand-daughter of *Theoderic*, who, after the death of *Vitig*, became the wife of *Germanus*, cousin to the Emperour Justinian, and who commanded for him against the Goths.

<sup>2</sup> This is a sort of current Danish ballad expression, which commonly occurs in the description of a severe conflict of any kind.

<sup>3</sup> This sublime picture of the sun looking dark and red over the field of battle, through

Great pity was it there to see  
Sae mony stalwart dead !<sup>1</sup>

There lay the steed ; here lay the man ;  
Gude friends that day did twin :  
They leuch na a' to the feast that cam'  
Whan the het bluid-bath was done.<sup>2</sup>

High Bermeris<sup>3</sup> bethought him than,  
All sadly as they lay :  
" There scarce live a hunder o' our men ;  
How should we win the day ?"

Then took Tiderich till his legs,  
And sindle luiokit back ;  
Sverting forgat to say gude-night ;  
And the gait till Bern they tak.

Tidrich he turn'd him right about,  
And high in the lift luiok'd he :  
" To Bern I trow is our safest gait ;  
Here fa we scoug nor lee !"

the clouds formed by the vapours which arose from the blood and sweat of the combatants, will call to the mind the admirable stanza in Campbell's Ode on the Battle of the Linden Hills:

" 'Tis morn ; but scarce yon level sun  
Can pierce the war-clouds, rolling dun,  
Where furious Frank, and fiery Hun,  
Shout in their sulph'rous canopy."

<sup>1</sup> " And many a gallant gentleman  
Lay gasping on the ground."—CHEVY CHACE.

<sup>2</sup> This is a very affecting picture, as every generous mind will recognise : the author was

— non sordidus auctor  
*Natura, Verique.*—HOR.

<sup>3</sup> Bermeris is Bermer Ris, i. e. the Giant Bermer.

Syne stay'd him Vidrich Verlandsön,  
All under a green know :<sup>1</sup>  
" Ye've little to ruse ye o' your raid  
The Danish kemps to cow !"

That tyde they drew frae Bernland out,  
Acht thousand strang were they :  
And back to Bern but only five  
And fifty took their way.

<sup>1</sup> In the German translation of this piece by Mr Græter, in *Bragur*, he has in this line mistaken *lide*, a hill, for *linde*, a (linden) tree.



## NOTE ON STARK TIDERICH, &amp;c.

P. 271, v. 20.—*King Olger and Stark Tiderich, &c.*

If we have succeeded according to our wish in rendering them into the dialect which we have adopted, it will be needless to point out to readers of taste, the singular beauty of this stanza, and the four that follow, which we trust will be found to justify the expectations which the introduction to the piece may have raised. As we have spoken of a higher degree of poetical merit in the *original* than will perhaps be allowed to our *copy* it is a justice due to all parties, by subjoining the Danish, to enable the reader to decide for himself.

St. 20.—Kong Olger og sterck Tidrich,  
De mödtis paa den hedde ;  
De sloge af magt foruden skemt,  
De vare i hu saa vrede.

De slogis i dage; de slogis i tre ;  
Ingen vildde hin anden vige ;  
De Danskè stridde saa mandelig,  
Deris herrè vildde de ickè svige.

Blodet rinder saa stridde som strøm,  
Under birge og dybe dalè :  
Den skat som förrè var lofvet,  
Den maatte de Berner betalè.

Rügen dref saa høyt i sky ;  
Og solen giørdis saa rød ;  
Det var stoer ynck at see der paa,  
Der blef saa mangen helledè død !

Der laa hesten ; og hissed laa manden ;  
Der skildis gode venner at :  
De loè ickè allè til gildè kommè,  
Der stoed saa hit et bad.