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The Ettin Langshanks and Vidrich Verlandson

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THE ETTIN LANGSHANKS AND
VIDRICH VERLANDSON.

In the Wilkina Saga, this *Langbeen Riser*, or Ettin Langshanks, is called the Giant Etgeir, (cap. 174, p. 255,) and the detail of his adventure with Vidrich, Vidig, Wittich, or Vidga, the son of the renowned smith Velint, Veyland, or Verland, (the fabricator of the celebrated sword Mimmung, or Mimmering,) differs very little from that given in the ballad. In the Preface to the *Kæmpe Viser*, the editor objects to the incongruity of making King Tidrich come into Britingshaw to seek for the Ettin Langshanks, "whereas in the MS., it is with more propriety said, that it was the king of Denmark's men that went in quest of him, which is most probable. Vidrich slew him, and says, that it could be said in Denmark, that he overcame the Ettin Langshanks, as that took place in Zealand, the largest island in Denmark, which is otherwise called Birtingsland. As a farther proof, there is found a (Danish) mile from Roskild, Birke, and Birkingshaw; and there also, not only the Ettin Langshanks's grave, both long and large, but also a hollow in the hill, where his house was, and a hole close to it, which is called his oven. In the year 1658, the College Rector, Mr Rasmus Brokmand, caused the barrow to be opened, but found only a pot full of ashes, and a rusty fragment of a sword."—Had the writer of this passage been acquainted with the Wilkina Saga, he would probably have been less confident in the force of his proofs.

In the introduction to the piece which follows that with which we

are now engaged in the Kæmpe Viser, Mr Veile makes Bratingsborg to be "a castle near Tranberg church, in Samsœ, whose triple ditch, rampart, wall, &c. could still be traced. Others were of opinion that it lay in Ifvcenis, north from Ifvœ.—Some think that Vidrich Verlandson (who ought to be called Villandson,) was born in the large district of Scania, which is now called Villands-herret, and lies buried on the side of Sollesborgs Ore, near Eisbeck Mill, where a large stone is still seen standing. Villands-herret still has a hammer on its seal, in memory of Sir Vidrich Verlandson."

The following description is given of the giant's person in the Wilkina Saga: "He was fearfully large; his legs were prodigiously thick and long; he had a strong, thick, and long body; there was the space of an ell between his eyes; and his whole stature was in proportion."—He is there represented as being placed to guard one of the passes into his brother's kingdom, for which he seemed, from his natural propensity to sleeping, to be but indifferently qualified. When Vidrich first found him, he snored so tremendously, that the leaves on the trees shook and rustled for a great distance round. It required many hard kicks in the ribs from Vidrich to make him open his eyes at all; and they were hardly well opened when they closed again, and the process of kicking must be commenced anew. The Highland and Irish Heroes, or, if you please, Giants, are many of them full as prone to somnolency as the Gothic ones; and, in the moment of danger, it was sometimes necessary to rouse them by dashing a fragment of a rock against their heads with such violence, that it rebounded for miles, &c.

THE
ETTIN LANGSHANKS.

TRANSLATED FROM THE DANISH KÆMPE VISEB, p. 34.

FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1591.

*Koning Tidrick sidder udi Bern,
Hand roser af sin Vælde :
Saa mangen hafver hand tungen,
Baade Kæmper og raske Helte.
Der stander en Berg heder Bern, og der
boer i Konning Tidrick.*

KING Tidrick sits intill Bern,
He rooses him of his might ;
Sae mony has he in battle cow'd,
Baith kemp and doughty knight.
*There stands a fortress hight Bern, and thereintill
dwelleth King Tidrick.*

King Tidrick stands at Bern,
And he looks out sae wide :
“ Wold God I wist of a kemp sae bold
Durst me in field abide !”

Syne answer'd Master Hildebrand,
 In war sae ware and wight :
 " There liggs a kemp in Birting's Bierg ;—
 Dare ye him rouse and fight ?"

" Hear thou, Master Hildebrand,
 Thou art a kemp sae rare :
 Ride thou the first i' the shaw the day,
 Our banner gay to bear."

Syne answer'd Master Hildebrand ;
 He was a kemp sae wise :
 " Nae banner will I bear the day,
 For sae unmeet a prize."

Syne answer'd Vidrich Verlandson,
 He spoke in full good mood :
 " The first i' the press I'se be the day,
 To march to Birting's Wood."

Up spak he, Vidrich Verlandson,
 And an angry man he grew ;
 " Thro' hauberk as thro' hacketon
 The smith's son's swerd sall hew."

They were well three hunder kemp,
 They drew to Birting's land :
 They sought the Ettin Langshanks,
 And in the shaw him fand.

Syne up spak Vidrich Verlandson :
 " A selcouth game you's see,
 Gin ye lat me ride first to the wood,
 And lippen sae far to me."

" Here bide ye a', ye kingis men,
 Whare twa green roads are met,

While I ride out in the wood alane,
To speer for you the gate."

It was Vidrich Verlandson,
Into the wood he rade;
And there he fand a little foot-path,
To the Ettin's lair that led.

Syne up spak he, King Tidrick:
"Hear what I say to thee;
Find ye the Ettin Langshanks,
Ye healna it frae me."

It was Vidrich Verlandson,
To Birting's hythe he wan;
And there the Ettin Langshanks
Laidly and black he fand.

It was Vidrich Verlandson
Strak the Ettin wi' his stang:
"Wake up, ye Langshanks Ettin;
Ye sleep baith hard and lang!"

"On this wild moor I've lien and slept
For lang and mony a year:
Nor ever a kemp has challenged me,
Or dared my rest to steer."

"Here am I, Vidrich Verlandson,
With good sword by my side,
And here I dare thy rest to steer,
And dare thy wrath abide."

It was the Ettin Langshanks,
He wink'd up wi' his ee:
"And whence is he, the page sae bald,
Dares say sic words to me?"

" Verland was my father hight,
 A smith of cunning rare;
 Bodild was my mother call'd,*
 A kingis daughter fair.

" My full good shield that Skrepping hight,
 Has mony a dent and clour;
 On Blank my helmet mony a swerd
 Has brast, of temper dour.

" My noble steed is Skimming hight,
 A wild horse of the wood;
 My swerd by men is Mimmering nam'd,
 Temper'd in heroes blood.

" And I hight Vidrich Verlandson,
 All steel-clad as you see;
 And, but thy lang shanks thou bestir,
 Sorely shalt thou abie.

" Hear thou, Ettin Langshanks,
 A word I winna lie;
 The king is in the wood, and he
 Maun tribute hae frae thee."

" What gold I have full well I know
 Sae well to guard and ware,
 Nor saucy page sall win't frae me,
 Nor groom to claim it dare."

" Thou to thy cost salt find, all young
 And little as I be,
 Thy head I'll frae thy shoulders hew,
 And win thy gold frae thee."

It was the Ettin Langshanks
 Nae langer lists to sleep:

* Bodild is, in another ballad, said to be the mother of Hogen.

“ Young kemp, away, and to thy speed,
If thou thy life wilt keep.”

Wi' baith his hooves up Skimming sprang
On the Ettin's side belyve ;
There seven o' his ribs he brake ;—
Sae they began to strive.

It was the Ettin Langshanks
Grip'd his steel stang in hand ;
He strak a stroke at Vidrich,
That the stang i' the hill did stand.

It was the Ettin Langshanks,
He ween'd to strike him stythe ;
But he his firsten straik has mist,
The steed sprang aff sae swyth.

'Twas then the Ettin Langshanks,
And he took on to yammer :
“ Now lies my stang i' the hillock fast
As it were driven wi' hammer.”

It was Vidrich Verlandson,
And wroth in mood he grew :
“ Skimming, about ! Good Mimmering,
Now see what thou canst do !”

In baith his hands he Mimmering took,
And strak sae stern and fierce,
That through the Langshanks Ettin's breast
The point his thairms did pierce.

Then first the Ettin Langshanks
Felt of a wound the pain ;
And gladly, had his strength remain'd,
Wad paid it back again.

“ Accursed, Vidrich, be thy arm,
 Accursed be thy brand,
 For the deadly wound that in my breast
 I’ve taken frae thy hand !”

“ Ettin, I’ll hew and scatter thee
 Like leaves before the wind,
 But and thou tell me in this wood
 Whare I thy gold may find.”

“ O spare me, Vidrich Verlandson,
 And never strike me dead ;
 Sae will I lead thee to the house
 Roof’d with the gold sae red.”

Vidrich rode and the Ettin crept ;
 Deep in the wood they’re gone ;
 They found the house with gold sae red
 Like burning light that shone.

“ Away ye heave that massy stane,
 Lift frae the bands the door ;
 And mair gold nor ’s in a’ this land
 Within ye’ll find in store.”

Syne answer’d Vidrich Verlandson ;
 Some treason he did fear :
 “ The kemp is neither ware nor wise
 That sic a stane wad steer.”

“ Well Vidrich kens to turn a steed ;
 ’Tis a’ he understands :
 But I’ll do mair wi’ twa fingers,
 Nor thou wi’ baith thy hands.”

Sae he has taen that massy stane,
 And lightly o’er did turn :

Fall grimly Vidrich ettled then
That he should rue that scorn.

“ There’s mair gold in this treasury
Nor fifteen kings can shaw :
Now hear thou, Vidrich Verlandson,
The first thou in sall ga.”

Syne up spak Vidrich Verlandson,
His cunning well he knew :
“ Be thou the first to venture in,
As fearless kemp should do.”

It was the Ettin Langshanks,
In at the door he saw :
Stark Vidrich strak wi’ baith his hands,
And hew’d his head him fra.

And he has taen the Ettin’s blood
And smear’d wi’ it his steed :
Sae rade he to King Tidrick,
Said, “ Foul has been my speed !”

And he has taen the Ettin’s corpse,
Set it against an aik ;
And all to tell the wondrous feat
His way does backward take.

“ Here bide ye a’, my doughty feres,
Under this green hill fair :
How Langshanks Ettin’s handled me,
To tell you grieves me sair.”

“ And has the Ettin mau’d thee sac ?
That is foul skaith and scorn ;
Then never anither sall be foil’d ;—
We’ll back to Bern return.”

“Thou turn thee, now, King Tidrich,
 Thou turn thee swythe wi' me;
 And a' the gold the Ettin had
 I'll shew belyve to thee.”

“And hast thou slain the Ettin the day?
 That mony a man sall weet;
 And the baldest kemp i' the world wide
 Thou never need fear to meet.”

It was then King Tidrich's men,
 They green'd the Ettin to see:
 And loud they leuch at his laidly bouk,
 As it stood by the tree.

They ween'd that he his lang shanks
 Yet after them might streek;
 And nae ane dared to nigh him near,
 Or wake him frae his sleep.

It was Vidrich Verlandson,
 Wi' mickle glee he said:
 “How would ye bide his living look
 That fleys ye sae whan dead?”

He strak the body wi' his staff;
 The head fell to the card:
 “In sooth that Ettin was a kemp
 That ance might well be fear'd.”

And they hae taen the red gold,
 What booty there did stand;
 And Vidrich got the better part,
 Well won with his right hand.

But little he reck'd a spoil sae rich;
 'Twas a' to win the gree;

And as the Ettin-queller wide
O'er Danmark fam'd to be.

Sae gladly rode they back to Bern ;
But Tidrick maist was glad ;
And Vidrich o' his menyie a'
The foremost place ay had.

HERO SONG

QUEEN OF DANMARK

EXTRACTED FROM THE DANISH KING RICHARD II. 1211.

It was in Denmark that the hero of a song is mentioned as "the White Heron".
All the long-haired, the warriors in the highest land and the best of the
people that the world would have thought a prince from a royal house
could be. The hero was a son of a king and was connected with the
history of the kingdom, but we have seen in the course of the
narrative and we have seen what the hero's name is in the
language of the people which is the subject of the

There was a king of Denmark
Who was called Richard II.
The king had a daughter
Whom he loved very dearly
And she was called the White Heron
Who was the fairest of them all

The king had a son
Whom he loved very dearly
And he was called the White Heron
Who was the fairest of them all
The king had a daughter
Whom he loved very dearly
And she was called the White Heron
Who was the fairest of them all