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

**Weber, Henry William**

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

Sir Lave and Sir John

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## SIR LAVA AND SIR JOHN.

TRANSLATED FROM THE DANISH KÆMPE VISER, p. 669.

[This piece, and that which follows it, have been inserted here as specimens of the old Danish humorous popular ballad; the only specimens I have ever met with, if "Sir Guncelin," in this volume, does not come under that description. "Sir Lavè" seems to have been originally a very serious composition, and has a good many stanzas in common with other serious pieces in the Danish Collection; but is rendered perfectly ludicrous by the quaint impertinence of Sir John's strange rejoinders, most of which, from the former popularity of the piece, are become in Denmark, at this day, proverbial expressions applied to an unwelcome guest of any kind, whom one does not know well how to get rid of.]

*Her Lavè hand reed sig under öe*  
*(J erè vel baarn)*  
*Der festè hand sig saa ven en möd.*  
*Jeg rider med, sagdè Jon.*  
*(J binder op helm af guld, og følger Her Jon, &c.)*

SIR Lavè he raid him under öe,  
*(Ye are well born)*  
 And he has wedded sae fair a may.  
 "I ride wi'm!" quo' John.  
*(Ye bind up your helm of gold, and follow Sir John.)*

He's married a bride, and he's brought her hame,  
And Knight and Child gaed to welcome them.

"Here ride I!" quo' John.

They set the bride on the bridal bink;  
Sir John he challenged them round to drink:

"Swyth! waucht it out!" quo' John.

They've taen the bride to the bridal bed;  
To loose her snood nae mind they had.

"I'll loose it!" quo' John.

In lap Sir John, and the door lock'd he:

"Ye bid Sir Lavè gude night frae me:

Here lye I!" quo' John.

Wi' that word's gane to Sir Lavè syne:

"Sir John is sleeping wi' young bride thine!"

"That I'm doing!" quo' John.

Sir Lavè he rapp'd at the door wi' din:

"Get up, Sir John, and lat us in!"

"See an I do that!" quo' John.

"Gin ye winna lat my bride alane,  
I'll gae to the king, and I'll complain."

"In a gude hour!" quo' John.

Ear on the morn, whan day did spring,  
Sir Lavè is gane to complain to the king.

"I will wi'm!" quo' John.

"I wedded yestreen sae fair a bride;  
Sir John has lien a' night by her side."

"That I did!" quo' John.

"Gin baith o' you hald the lady sae dear,  
Then ye for her sake should break a spear."

"Content!" quo' John.

The morn, the sun he shone sae bright;  
The knights they met to see the sight.

"Here am I!" quo' John.

The first ae tilt that they raid sae free,  
Sir John's horse he fell down on his knee.

"Help now, God!" quo' John.

The neisten tilt they thegither raid,  
O' the eard Sir Lavè was sprawling laid.

"There lies he!" quo' John.

Sir John he has gane to the castell in:  
Up stood the lady there afore him.

"Thou art mine!" quo' John.

Sir John's made amends for a' his harms,  
(*Ye are well born,*)

And now he sleeps in the lady's arms.

"I have her bodily," quo' John.

(*Ye bind up your helm of gold and follow Sir John.*)

## NOTE ON SIR LAVE AND SIR JOHN.

THE notes on the foregoing piece, and on Libussa, which are referred to in another part of this work, having been by some accident mislaid while at the press, and it being impossible to replace them at present, as no copy or reference is preserved; I shall only briefly observe here, that the ceremonies of "setting the bride on the bridal bench," loosing her snood, &c., are still preserved in Jutland, Ditmarsh, and Sleswig, and probably in Holstein, and other parts of the antient Angle-land. Immediately on her return from the church, after being married, the bride is set in great state, on the sofa or bench near the stove or fire-place, in the best room in the house, to receive the compliments, and wedding gifts, of the guests. The presents are laid beside her on the bench, while the bride-men hand round drink, bride-cake, &c. In Scotland, the presents were formerly laid on the marriage bed; and in some parts of the country this usage is still kept up, although with little of its original benevolence and patriarchal dignity. I remember several instances of it in Morayshire when I was a boy; in one of which a droll old fellow (still alive) threw a flail on the bed, for the young goodman's use, should his wife prove disobedient; on which his wife, in order to preserve the balance of power in their new state, presented the young goodwife with a large new kitchen tongs, with suitable instructions how and when it was to be used. The flail, however, soon found its way to its proper place, the barn; and the tongs probably still serves the goodwife to stir up the *ingle* against John's coming in cold and weary from his labour.

The ceremony of putting on the *curtsh*, or close cap, on the morning after the marriage, when the young wife is no longer entitled to wear the *snood*, or maiden tyre, is still observed in the north of Scotland, and gives the matrons in the neighbourhood an opportunity of enjoying a scene of jollity and gossiping, from which those who may still wear *snoods* are very properly excluded.