

Select Tale.

[From Chamber's Edinburgh Journal.]

THE BRIDE

OR, MR. KILLWINNING'S THIRD WEDDING DAY.

"Rat-tat-tat-tat-tat!" went the knocker at No. 3 Gillyflower Place; and half a dozen faces from the opposite house peeped over and under, and between the blind to catch a glimpse of Mr. Killwinning, who was to be married to-morrow for the third time.

"Quick!" said Ellen, (at No. 3's vis-a-vis,) "there's Mr. Killwinning!"

"Where?" said Kate, rushing over her little brother to the window.

"There—at his own door, beginning already to take off his coat."

"How very ridiculous!" exclaimed Kate; "why does he do so?"

"He is rather eccentric; it's only a way he has," replied her sister. "A way to show off his figure, his smart waistcoat, and his fine white linen all at once, to admiring eyes like ours!"

"A pretty figure to show off!" laughed Kate—"a little fusby fat man, with—Oh, how provoking!" continued she, as the door closed on Mr. Killwinning; "whither has he vanished?"

"Into the air, doubtless."

"Oh no," said Kate; "there he is in the dining room, pulling up the blind."

"Oh do come away from the window!" implored Ellen, "lest he should see us; and mamma would be so angry at our rudeness."

The young ladies retired from the window to discuss the age, looks, and circumstances of the bridegroom whom they had just seen, together with the age, looks and circumstances of the bride whom they had never seen; and the conclusion arrived at was that he was a remarkably neat, good-humored looking, little fat man, but Kate thought not at all desirable for a husband, and that the fiancée must be old and ugly; with a great deal of money—not at all interesting in a wife.

"Well," said Kate, who was the more severe of the two, "I don't envy Mrs. Killwinning; I should like something a little more dashing and handsome for my husband!"

"And perhaps not be half so happy," sensibly remarked Ellen. "I assure you notwithstanding Mr. Killwinning's anti-romantic appearance, he can be very agreeable and I have no doubt will make a good husband."

"Make a good husband!" tauntingly echoed Kate, who, just returned from visiting an aunt in a large commercial town, had conceived strange notions of tall young gentlemen with bushy dark whiskers—poor Mr. Killwinning had none—"your ideas, Ellen are always so commonplace. It really would be charitable to persuade aunt to send you an invitation for a short time, that you might see a little of the world, but then, who could keep Charlie and Bob in order, hear them their lessons, and mend their clothes in your absence? Not I, I'm sure."

"I have but little curiosity to see the world, as you call it, and am quite contented to remain where I am," replied Ellen, "so long as I am serviceable to my little brothers and not entirely a burden on poor mamma."

"Well I suppose you like this sort of humdrum life, and aspire to the 'useful' more than the 'ornamental.' Oh give me the exciting gayeties of town life—balls, concerts and plays in rapid succession! You have no idea, Ellen, of the advantage of a brilliantly lighted, crowded room, to a well-dressed woman; it shows her off amazingly; her face all smiles and amiability, the men think her an angel; and, nine times out of ten, requesting her hand for the next quadrille, is the prelude to soliciting it for life."

"Why, Kate," said Ellen, half amused, and yet a little alarmed at her sister's enthusiastic manner, "your animated description would make one believe you were quite familiar with such scenes?"

"Alas, no!" sighed Kate. "Aunt once contrived to send me with some friends to a fancy ball, attired as a gipsy girl; you may be sure 'my poverty and not my will consented' to so mean a costume. I saw then where happiness was to be found; the rich monopolize it, and there is no catching even a glimpse of it unless you possess that golden key which is the open sesame to their exclusive reunions."

The discussion interrupted by the announcement of "Mrs. and the Miss Jenkenses," Miss Jenetta, Miss Joanna, and Miss Jemima Jenkins followed their mamma into the room in single file, like geese on a common, and with not a little of that bird's spiteful propensities.

"How do you do, my loves?" asked Mrs. Jenkins, in her usual dignified and patron-

ising manner. "Mrs. Clacket is out, I suppose? Indeed, I didn't expect to find any of you at home on so sweet a morning; you shouldn't mope so, this fine summer weather; I always insist on these children (the youngest was twenty seven) taking the air once a day; it gives them a fine healthy appearance (they were of lamp post like symmetry), and counteracts the effect of the late hours of the numerous gay parties they are forced into.—You are to be at Mr. Killwinning's wedding to-morrow?"

"We have not received any invitation," said Ellen, blushing from a consciousness of the slight, which she could not help feeling, and in which she knew the Jenkenses would triumph.

"Bless me, how very extraordinary!" exclaimed Mrs. Jenkens, secretly exulting that the matured charms of her daughters would not have to compete with the sprightliness of Kate, though as for the backward, awkward and retiring Ellen, she scarcely vouchsafed her a thought. "You quite amaze me! Poor things! I really feel for you. How ever, my daughters, Jenetta, Joanna, and Jemima shall call and tell you all about it; so, my dears, you must just console yourselves with the wedding at second hand.—Jemima has a great talent for imitation, which enables her most amusingly to take off all her acquaintances; so she will give you the airs and graces of the bride to the life; and though this is a decided slight—I should say almost an insult—don't take it to heart, dears; I promise you, you shall be at a wedding when my girls are married. (A safe promise.) By the by, Miss Kate, have you heard the rank of the bride?"

"I have not heard," said Kate, who, from Mrs. Jenkens's volubility, was allowed to say very little.

"Dear me, you know nothing!" observed Mrs. Jenkens, who prided herself on knowing everything. "Well, then, I can tell you; it is a young foreign countess—a sudden liking quite a similar affair to the Emperor Napoleon's choice of the Countess Theba. Of course you know, Miss Ellen, for you have been more at home than your sister, that Mr. Killwinning is very eccentric?"

"I know nothing more of Mr. Killwinning," said Ellen, "than to feel convinced that whoever his bride may be, she will justify his choice."

"Oh, of course, of course; and that's very generous of you," impertinently observed Mrs. Jenkens, "considering you are not invited. Then Mr. Killwinning, being so exceedingly rich, may do just as he pleases.—It's quite an affectation his living in that small house opposite; but he does so many out of the way things—for instance, his sending twenty pounds to old lame Nelly, who had her cottage burned down last week; but you don't know that either, I suppose?"

"Oh, yes, I do know that," provokingly replied Ellen. "Mr. Killwinning happened to ask me some questions about poor old Nelly on our way home from church last Sunday."

"Oh, indeed!" dryly remarked Mrs. Jennings, with something of the feeling which an unexpected check at chess gives the hitherto attacking party. "I was not aware that Mr. Killwinning was in the habit of conversing with you as you came out of church! But good-by, loves; remember us to dear Mrs. Clacket! / Jenetta, Joanna, and Jemima, shall each save you a little bite of bride cake; so keep up your spirits."

"Now confess," said Kate, when they were gone; "isn't it mortifying, Ellen, that Mr. Killwinning should have omitted us in his invitations, thereby depriving you of one scene of gayety at least that seemed within your reach?"

"N—no," replied Ellen, half reluctantly.

"As for me," continued Kate in an exulting yet mortified tone, "I am thankful that we shall be spared the infirmity—the wedding breakfast will be a tiresome thing, and of course, altogether, it will be a dreadful dull affair. And for my own part, I'd much rather remain at home, but for the impertinence of that pompous, patronising Mrs. Jenkins, with her prim, perpendicular daughters, looking for all the world, like half animated thread papers with silk outside."

"Girls," said Mrs. Clacket, the mamma, bursting into the room out of breath, card case in hand, just returned from a round of gossiping morning calls—"girls, go and look out your lavender silks and white lace gowns directly. I trust they're not too shabby for the occasion," she continued gasping and throwing herself into a chair; "I am most anxious you should make a good appearance. I don't mind a few shillings for ribbons. Your patent leather shoes of course will do, and your open work thread stockings are the very thing. Do you hear me? Have you no regard for the feelings of a mother? Will you go and look up the lavender silks?"

"But what for, mamma?" asked both girls at once.

"It was a mistake. Mr. Killwinning says—I met him just now—that we were the first on the list of invitations; the card has evidently been kept back through envy or mistake—the former no doubt, I am quite convinced of that, and I am naturally anxious that my girls should look better than any body else. The Miss Potters, of course will, as usual, be enveloped in their everlasting white tarletons, with their red heads protruding like the sun through a fog; I am not afraid of them, it is the Jenkenses I dread—those forward Jenkenses! I saw the three girls come out of Brown's shop, followed by a boy with a parcel. I think the parcel looked soft, as if filled with nothing but tulle and ribbons—at least, I hope so—I trust there are no new dresses in the wind. If they wear their old blue watered silks we're safe."

"But who is to be the bride, mamma?" inquired Kate.

"I can't tell; in fact no body knows. Mr. Killwinning means to surprise us, that is quite evident. There are various surmises afloat; some say it is a poor orphan from Ireland, his native country; others fear it may be an actress, to whom he once anonymously sent a forget-me-not ring; and there are apprehensions of a low marriage with a pretty servant girl of his mother's; but as we have not heard of any bans being published, or license procured, were all anxious:ly waiting for to-morrow morning to enlighten us."

"But, dear mamma," observed Kate, "you speak of Mr. Killwinning as if he were a bachelor and yet he has been married twice. What were his first wives like?"

"Well, my dear I did once condescend to converse with his Irish servant, who seems as eccentric as himself; and he informed me that the first Mrs. Killwinning was forty when his master was a boy of eighteen; nevertheless, as she had a great deal of money, he married her, but she lived many years to punish him for his mercenary motives; then he married a governess who was consumptive, and popped off very soon; he came here immediately on her decease—eighteen months ago come next August—and has certainly made himself excessively agreeable at all our balls and parties, but without a rumor of any intention to marry again, until the issue of invitations to his wedding breakfast took us all by surprise; and, what is more surprising still, and I think, proves that his bride must be a mere nobody, the wedding breakfast is to be at his own house, and before the ceremony has taken place—however, he is very eccentric, and does all differently from other people."

The lavender silks were now produced; Kate's had undergone severe service on the visit to her aunt, while Ellen's was almost as good as new; it was therefore suggested by Ellen, faintly opposed by Kate, and ultimately and gladly suggested by the mamma, as Kate was the pet and the elder, and both the same style of figure, that there should be an exchange of dresses. "It didn't so much matter for Ellen," who gave up her bright looking silk quite cheerfully, and really after hemming up the frayed bottom of the skirt and rubbing out a few stains with the last "new patent reviver," Kate's old gown, like Dominic Sampson's second suit, seemed "renovated miraculously." The mamma—a smart widow of two years' standing, with much to do on very small means—was to be attired in her becoming second morning grey satin.

The house was in a perfect bustle of preparation, Mrs. Clacket giving directions to everybody about everything; at last concluding the evening's lecture to her daughters in these words: "And now, girls, let me impress upon you the necessity of looking your best. Of all parties for young people a wedding party is the most important; it is so exceedingly catching; never passing off without a proposal to somebody. The elegant Mr. Henderson, who is evidently thinking of getting married, will be there;—and Dr. Quackem, of Crosbon Lodge, Caryll Row, whose sickly wife, notwithstanding all his skill and new mode of treatment, can't last much longer. What are giggling at, Kate? Ellen, you needn't frown; a mother's anxiety justifies my looking forward to these casualties. The times are dreadful. All the men are going to Australia—and what prospect has a mother for her marriageable daughters? Therefore, my dear girls, let me beseech you to make the most of yourselves; and, Ellen, as your hair—like Sampson's—is your strong point, put it in papers, braids being so universally worn, the singularity of ringlets will be attractive."

The girls promised to obey their mamma and commenced all the mysteries of curling, and crimping, to give the hair that full, wa-

vy appearance, which was to make the tide flow in their favor, and extinguish the Potters and Jenkenses forever.

Meanwhile, Mr. Killwinning, the grand cause of this excitement, was lounging on the sofa, sipping his wine and reading Punch in the cool of the evening, the last of his double widowerhood—when his servant Tim entered the room, and with many bows and scrapes commenced:

"I humbly axes pardon, sir; but Biddy the cook has seduced me—as she says it's necessary to the domestic arrangements of the establishment—to make so bold as to inquire whether the mistress'll slape at home to-morrow night?"

"What's that to you or the cook either, sir?"

"Nothin' in life, sir; and I'm glad for the honor of the family, that you don't name it. May I make so bold agin, sir, as to inquire without offence, if it's your intention to take a continental trip over the provinces in the express thrain?"

"At fault again, Tim; so I warn you to make no more impertinent inquiries."

"Long life to your honor—I've hit at last! You'd do the thing gintaly, as all the Killwinnings did before you, and go off in true methropolis Dublin style—in an illigent yelly poshay-and-four?"

"I shall not satisfy your curiosity, Tim—so get out."

"Is it get out? sure I'm going sir. I've only one confidential communication, sir—am I to meet her at the thrain, sir?"

"Meet whom, Tim?"

"The mistress, sir."

"What mistress, Tim?"

"That's what I would like to know, sir."

"You mean the future Mrs. Killwinning, I suppose?"

"Divil another, sir!"

"I don't expect her by train, Tim."

"Then, as this is an inland, how is she to come, sir?"

"Like Venus, rising from the sea; and so on, completing the journey in the first overland balloon she meets with," said Mr Killwinning.

"What with the water and the wind, it'll be a could journey, sir!"

"Depend upon it, Tim, Mrs. Killwinning will send you about your business if you're so bold."

"Sure, sir, I've always been told that my bashfulness gits the better iv me. Didn't the girls name me 'Timorous Tim' through Dublin and the parts adjacent? But there's one thing troubles me, and I'd like to spake it."

"Well out with it Tim."

"We've seen none of the courtin', sir; and the divil a bit of a ladylike letter have you ever givin me to drop into the Post; and puttin' that and that together, Biddy the cooks conserved for you, sir, seem' that she's an Irish girl like myself, and has apprehensions that you're struggling under a delusion."

"What do you mean by a delusion Tim?"

"It is this sir: I want knew a gentleman, a personal friend of my own, who was rejected in his circumstances to drivin' a car around the Lakes of Killarney; he was laboring under the same disense as yourself, sir—that a lady was going to marry him; and when the weddin-night came, his bride was turned into a trout and was fried for his supper."

"Well," said his master laughing, "tell Biddy she'll have other fish to fry when Mrs. Killwinning comes home. By the by, Tim."

"Yes, sir."

"Has my new coat come?"

"It has sir."

"And when are the waiters to be here from Dawson's Hotel to set out the breakfast?"

"At seven o'clock, sir; the quality is invited at nine; secin that's an aisy hour, and won't put people about. Will you take a fever to-morrow, sir?"

"I hope not Tim unless you call taking a wife a fever."

"By no means, sir, it's a fever to put at the breast. I've got all the fevors in a box; and while the tay and coffee's poorin' out, I'll be pinin' thim to the postillions and the horses heads. You'll get to the church, sir, for I hope you won't be after tying the Hymenal knot in a hethenish fashion in the house—before eleven; and you and Mrs. Killwinning, good luck to her wherever she may come from—will be off by twelve, to kape the honey moon in the yelly poshay."

"Now, Tim, I've had enough of you, so get out."

"Go in, sir."

"Take care that every thing looks well; make the most of the plate and china do you hear?"

"No fears sir, and my heart's glad that your takin' an intherist in the looks of things. I axes pardon again," said Tim his face

glowing with anxiety, "but I am uneasy about your personal appearance, and know that the ladies is particular. Ever since the Rheumatics, you tuk to wearin' thim red night caps—wouldn't a white one be more becoming sir?"

"This was too much, and Tim was fairly turned out of the room.

The sun shone brightly on the morning of Mr. Killwinning third wedding day. At half past eight the guests began to arrive.—Tim had either bought or borrowed a bright pea-green swallow tailed coat and yellow waiscoat, which was his bean-ideal of a wedding garment. He was determined to do the thing in style, so far as he was concerned, and according to his own notions of gentility, posted himself at the drawing-room door, to announce "the quality." I'm getting uneasy, where's the bride to come from?—We'll be disgraced entirely! There's mather lookin' in the drawing room, and nobody coming to marry him! Biddy, my jewel! couldn't you dress yourself in a wrathe of orange blossoms, to kape up the posterity and respectability of the Killwinnings?"

"Indeed thin, Tim," said Biddy, "I would not be-after doin' so unlucky a thing as to put on the wrathe before my own time comes; let the mather find a wrathe for the bride, and a bride for the wrathe." The guests arriving quickly, Tim resumed the dignity of office.

"The Honorable Miss Potters—of Roundabout Place," bawled Tim, announcing the little Potters, who looked as symmetrical as so many Dutch cheeses: "Mr. Jerimiah Henderson—of the Branch Bank of Illigance—Ingland, I mean," continued Tim, dubbing, sotto voice, every one with his vocation, or some title of his own conferring. "The three Miss Jenkenses—of Treacle Terrace, spinsters!"

The three Miss Jenkenses, who overheard the description, simultaneously turned their frowning faces towards Tim—"if looks could kill, he had not lived," but nothing daunted, he went on. "The Very Riverint Archdeacon Tithe-ever—from the Close-cum Catchall, D. D. The learned Doctur Quackem of Cross-bones Lodge, Care' Ill Row, M. D. Save and preserve us! Mr. Flexible Flint—of Tinder-touch Hall, and Mrs. and Miss Clackets—from over the way!"

These, with several others, made a comfortable squeeze at the breakfast table, where everything was elegantly arranged, and at the head of which sat Mr. Killwinning, really looking remarkably well, and almost interesting. The breakfast was so substantial as to cause some of the gentlemen to forget that they had come for any other purpose than to partake of it; but the ladies were vigilant watchers, with one eye on the door, and the other on Mr. Killwinning, who seemed more than ever agreeable and polite to all; yet an accurate observer might notice a slight restlessness and increasing anxiety, which, without impairing his extreme urbanity, seemed at variance with his usual placid equanimity.

Mrs. Clacket, who couldn't be silent; and who, seated on Mr. Killwinning's right, kept up a running-fire of small-talk, said: "My dear Mr. Killwinning, allow me to congratulate you on—the weather"—there certainly seemed to be no wife forthcoming to congratulate him upon—"I consider this bright morning particularly auspicious; and you know the old saying: 'Happy is the bride the sun shines on.'"

This was a sort of electric touch that turned all eyes into a note of interrogation towards Mr. Killwinning. He answered it with the most ingenuous smile, saying: "My dear Mrs. Clacket, she shall be as happy as a devoted husband can make her; and I trust she may look as bright and beautiful as she does at this moment!"

More notes of interrogation from "ladies' eyes, around." This allusion of Mr. Killwinning's gave the bride "a local habitation," though no name. She must be in the room—but where?—Some fancied she might be shut up in the cupboard; others, that she was under the table. Mr. Flexible Flint, a soft gentleman, drawled out to Miss Jenkens: "Our friend, the bridegroom, appears to be indulging in hallucination, or is under the influence of clairvoyance, unless, my dear Miss Jenkens, you are the happy woman."

"Oh, Heaven forbid!" replied Miss Jenkens, with well-affecting indignation.

Mr. Killwinning—whose every word and movement were undergoing severe criticism—now looked at his watch.

"He begins to suspect he's jilted," whispered Flint to Jenkens.

Mr. Killwinning rose, evidently for the purpose of making a speech.

"Poor devil!" compassionately exclaimed Flint.

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