

William Allingham (1824-89)

5 *The Nobleman's Wedding*

(To an old Irish Tune.)

Once I was guest at a Nobleman's wedding;
Fair was the Bride, but she scarce had been kind;
And now in our mirth, she had tears nigh the shedding;
Her former true lover still runs in her mind.

Clothed like a minstrel, her former true lover 5
Has taken his harp up, and tuned all the strings;
There among strangers, his grief to discover,
A fair maiden's falsehood he bitterly sings.

"O here is the token of gold that was broken;
Through seven long years it was kept for your sake; 10
You gave it to me as a true lover's token;
No longer I'll wear it, asleep or awake."

She sat in her place by the head of the table,
The words of his ditty she mark'd them right well;
To sit any longer this bride was not able, 15
So down, in a faint, from the carved chair she fell.

"O one, one request, my lord, one and no other,
O this one request will you grant it to me?
To lie for this night in the arms of my mother,
And ever, and ever, thereafter with thee." 20

Her one one request it was granted her fairly;
Pale were her cheeks as she went up to bed;
And the very next morning, early, early,
They rose and they found this young bride was dead.

The bridegroom ran quickly, he held her, he kiss'd her, 25
He spoke loud and low, and listen'd full fain;
He call'd on her waiting-maids round to assist her,
But nothing could bring the lost breath back again.

O carry her softly! the grave is made ready;
At head and at foot plant a laurel-bush green; 30
For she was a young and a sweet noble lady,
The fairest young bride that I ever have seen.

1877

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