

Folk & Traditional Song Lyrics

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Whirlie-Wha (A)

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The last braw wedding that I was at
Was on a Hallow day
An' there was meikle meikle fun
An' there was meikle play.
The bells they rang the auld wives sang
An' to the kirk went they a'
The bride's to bed wi' the silly bridegroom
To play wi' his whilrie-wha.--

First she turn't her back to him
An' syne she turn't her wame
Lang she leuk't for kin'ness
But kin'ness she gat nane.--
At length she's ta'en him in her arms
Flung him again' the wa'
Says lie ye there ye fumblin devil
Ye've lost yir whirlie-wha.--

O wae light on my kith and kin
They've done me meikle ill,
They've married me to an auld man
Fou sair again my will
But I'll dress mysel in my ribbons sae green
Nae lassie will be sae braw
An I'll hire a bonny young lad o' my ain
To play wi' his whirlie-wha.-

----- From the early 19th-century Cunningham MS., pp. 139-40; first printed in Legman's Horn Book (1964), 138-9; here from Merry Muses of Caledonia (1965), 125-6. Cf. B, from Buchan, 1832.

No tune is indicated, and no air with this title has been found, but Legman finds it in the same rhythm, and possibly to the same tune, as "The Blythsome Bridal", q.v. This is, I think, not feasible. I would expect the present song to go to a regular 6/8 jig, whereas "The Blythsome Bridal" is a 9/8 (slip) jig. (Whence I have written a tune to fit.--tho the tune of "The Dundee Weaver" would fit nicely.) [P.S.: WBO has identified the required tune, dated to 1788.] In 3.2, Cunningham changed "harm" to "ill" (for the rhyme).

"Whirlie-wha" is a sort of a nonce w ornament, thingamajig". Legman's connection with "whilliewha",="cheat" (followed by Randall) is evidently erroneous. An expurgation of st. 1 in Cunningham's ed. of Works (pub. Jack, c. 1850, II.93), with differs:
1.1 bridal 1.2 Hallowmass 1.3 routh o' drink and fun

1.4 And mickle mirth and play.

1.2 1.5 and the carlins 1.6 And the dames danced in the ha';

1.7 bride went 1.3 8 In the midst o' her kimmers a'.

MS

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