

Thomas Hood (1799-1845)

7 *The Ghost*

A Very Serious Ballad

'I'll be your second.' — *Liston*.

In Middle Row, some years ago,
There lived one Mr. Brown;
And many folks considered him
The stoutest man in town.

But Brown and stout will both wear out, 5
One Friday he died hard,
And left a widow'd wife to mourn,
At twenty pence a yard.

Now widow B. in two short months
Thought mourning quite a tax, 10
And wish'd, like Mr. Wilberforce,
To *manumit* her blacks.

With Mr. Street she soon was sweet;
The thing thus came about:
She asked him in at home, and then 15
At church he asked her out!

Assurance such as this the man
In ashes could not stand;
So like a Phoenix he rose up
Against the Hand in Hand. 20

One dreary night the angry sprite
Appeared before her view;
It came a little after one,
But she was after two!

'Oh Mrs. B., oh Mrs. B.!' 25
Are these your sorrow's deeds,
Already getting up a flame,

To burn your widow's weeds?

'It's not so long since I have left
For aye the mortal scene; 30
My Memory — like Rogers's,
Should still be bound in green!

'Yet if my face you still retrace
I almost have a doubt —
I'm like an old Forget-Me-Not, 35
With all the leaves torn out!

'To think that on that finger joint
Another pledge should cling;
Oh Bess! upon my very soul,
It struck like "Knock and Ring." 40

'A ton of marble on my breast
Can't hinder my return;
Your conduct, Ma'am, has set my blood
A-boiling in my urn!

'Remember, oh! remember, how 45
The marriage rite did run, —
If ever we one flesh should be,
'Tis now — when I have none!

'And you, Sir — once a bosom friend —
Of perjured faith convict, 50
As ghostly toe can give no blow,
Consider you are kick'd.

'A hollow voice is all I have,
But this I tell you plain,
Marry come up! — you marry, Ma'am, 55
And I'll come up again.'

More he had said, but chanticleer
The spritely shade did shock
With sudden crow, and off he went,
Like fowling-piece at cock! 60

1839

(From *The Complete Poetical Works of Thomas Hood*.
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