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, One Friday he died hard, And left a widow'd wife to mourn, At twenty pence a yard.	5
Now widow B. in two short months Thought mourning quite a tax, And wish'd, like Mr. Wilberforce, To manumit her blacks.	10
With Mr. Street she soon was sweet; The thing thus came about: She asked him in at home, and then At church he asked her out!	15
Assurance such as this the man In ashes could not stand; So like a Phœnix 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!	

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'Oh Mrs. B., oh Mrs. B.!

Already getting up a flame,

Are these your sorrow's deeds,

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!	
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'Yet if my face you still retrace	
I almost have a doubt —	0.5
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,	00
Like fowling-piece at cock!	60

(From *The Complete Poetical Works of Thomas Hood.* Ed. with Notes by Walter Jerrold. Oxford UP, 1911)