

The Ghost

By Thomas Hood

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.

Now widow B. in two short months
Thought mourning quite a tax;
And wished, like Mr. Wilberforce,
To *manumit* her blacks.

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

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

“Oh, Mrs. B., O Mrs. B.,
Are these your sorrow's deeds,
Already getting up a flame
To burn our widows' weeds?”

“It's not so long since I have left
For aye the mortal scene;
My memory—like Roger'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
With all the leaves torn out!

“To think that on that finger-joint
Another pledge should cling;
O Bess! upon my very soul
It struck like ‘Knock and Ring.’

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

“Remember, oh, remember how
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,
As ghostly toe can give no blow,
Consider yourself kicked.

“A hollow voice is all I have,
But this I tell you plain,
Marry come up! you marry, ma’am,
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!