

**MORE VERSE AND
PROSE. VOL. I**

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More verse and prose. Vol. I by Cornlaw Rhymer

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CORN LAW RHYMER

**MORE VERSE AND
PROSE. VOL. I**

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MORE VERSE AND PROSE

BY THE

CORNLAW RHYMER.

[Ebenezer Elliott]

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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LONDON :

CHARLES FOX, 67, PATERNOSTER ROW.

1850.

PREFACE.

THE Elgin marbles are representations of the processions, and battles, (the everyday occurrences, and commonplace,) of old Greece; and the Elgin marbles are poetry in the highest.

In England, Railway meetings and speeches are everyday occurrences; and the evil doings in railways constitute a drama of horrors, compared with some of the actors in which, Rush (the wretch who paid himself in blood for unexhausted improvements,) was a stainless angel! Has not that drama its poetry? Perhaps, a hundred millions have been wasted in unwanted railways! I did my best to prevent that waste; and though I cannot know that any of my writings or sayings will live, I desire that my children and theirs shall know (through them) that I did my duty, while others were supine.*

To be summoned on a jury is an everyday

* See "Doggrel for Dupes," and a "Speech delivered at the Cutlers' Hall, Sheffield," in Vol. II.

occurrence in England; but if I had never been summoned on a jury, I should not have known that there is a class of men in England, whose capital (worth, at least, two thousand millions,) may be said to be in a state of outlawry, left, without any legal protection, to the mercy of another class, who may appropriate, and, with perfect impunity, proceed to devour it at any moment; for the customary law, called "Custom of the Country," established by tenants as their sole reliance, is not binding on landlords. Say not that this state of things has not its poetry!*

"Bets, Bubbles, and Banking" are everyday matters in England; but such things have furnished the means for carrying on, in my time, wars which have cost the lives of ten millions of men; in the infinite horror of which, Trafalgar and Waterloo were but trifling though splendid incidents! Now, to consecrate in the poetry of sculpture this tremendous commonplace, a Phidias only is wanted. In due time, that Phidias will be

* See "The Bard Among His Betters," in Vol. II.

found; and then, our days of degradation will have *their* Parthenon.*

In the meantime, I claim to have been a pioneer of the greatest, the most beneficial, the only crimeless Revolution, which man has yet seen. I also claim to be the Poet of that Revolution—the Bard of Freetrade; and through the prosperity, wisdom, and loving-kindness which Freetrade will ultimately bring, the Bard of Universal Peace. I know not that my claims will be conceded; the world will lose nothing, if it be not conceded, nor will I complain, but neither will I bate a jot of my right; for self-sacrifice in concession to wrong has ever been the root of worst humiliation—and tyrants come of slaves.

It is remarkable that Freetrade has been carried by the middle-classes, not only without the assistance of the working-classes, but in spite of their opposition. When I became a Freetrade agitator in 1824, I could not find one respectable shopkeeper who thought the cornlaws an evil. The merchants, to a man, thought them beneficial. Exactly in propor-

* See "Letters on Bets, Bubbles, Banking, and Bloodshed," in Vol. II.

tion to the plunder-power exercised on his fortunes by the aristocracy, did the would-be Squire idolize his destroyers ; and I had discussed the question ten years in all ways—by speech and writing, in prose and verse—before I made my first Sheffield convert of the mercantile class, William Ibbotson, Esq. of Globe Works. Did I not think I had done a feat? Yea, I felt it through my heart's core. But then came Feargus, and his blarney ; trades-unionism, fierce in its imitative glory ; and chartism, with its stone-blind selfishness ; all fighting for the enemy ! Wisehead, at last, was born of Empty-Pocket, in a respectable neighbourhood ; and from that moment Monopoly began to tremble.*

EBENEZER ELLIOTT.

*Hargate Hill, near Barnesley,
October 17, 1849.*

* See A Critique on "Cornlaw Rhymes, &c." written by the late Robert Southey for the Quarterly Review, but rejected by the editor, after a proof had been printed and corrected, in Vol. II.

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LYRICS FOR MY DAUGHTERS.