

EBENEZER ELLIOTT, THE CORN-LAW RHYMER



Elliott did not sing, but scream; he did not lament, but blaspheme: his verses were curses showered right and left with indiscriminate frenzy. No matter: they stirred the heart of the multitude, and roused the curiosity of the refined.

— CHAMBERS' PAPERS FOR THE PEOPLE, 1850.

[VISIT HIS INTERNET HOME PAGE](#)

**“NARRATIVE HISTORY” AMOUNTS TO FABULATION,
THE REAL STUFF BEING MERE CHRONOLOGY**



THE CORN-LAW RHYMER

EBENEZER ELLIOTT

1781

March 17, Saturday: [Ebenezer Elliott](#) was born at the New Foundry, Masbrough, in the Parish of Rotherham, Yorkshire, England. His father, a Radical and Calvinist engaged in the iron trade, was known locally on account of his manner in delivering sermons, as “Devil Elliott.”

NOBODY COULD GUESS WHAT WOULD HAPPEN NEXT



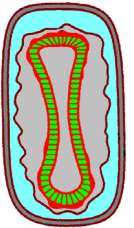


EBENEZER ELLIOTT

THE CORN-LAW RHYMER

1787

Six-year-old [Ebenezer Elliott](#) came down with the [small pox](#). For six weeks he would be blind. When he would recover, his features would be disfigured as you can see below. He would be in ill health for most of his life.



**LIFE IS LIVED FORWARD BUT UNDERSTOOD BACKWARD?
— NO, THAT’S GIVING TOO MUCH TO THE HISTORIAN’S STORIES.
LIFE ISN’T TO BE UNDERSTOOD EITHER FORWARD OR BACKWARD.**



THE CORN-LAW RHYMER

EBENEZER ELLIOTT

1790

Nine-year-old [Ebenezer Elliott](#) ran away from home.

THE FUTURE IS MOST READILY PREDICTED IN RETROSPECT





EBENEZER ELLIOTT

THE CORN-LAW RHYMER

1797

Sixteen-year-old [Ebenezer Elliott](#) had been educated at a dame school and then at the Hollis School in Rotherham, where he was “taught to write and little more.” School had not liked him, and he had not liked school, but at the age of 14 he had begun a program of self-education, primarily in botany, in an attempt to improve himself. He was intrigued, for instance, by the color plates of flowers in Sowerby’s ENGLISH BOTANY. When Giles Elliott, a younger brother, read to him a poem from James Thomson’s SEASONS that described polyanthus and auricular flowers, he formed a grand scheme that he might integrate his love for nature, his talent for drawing, and his creation of poems, by publishing books made up of his poetry interspersed with his flower illustrations. At this point, however, he was put to work in his father’s New Foundry of Masbrough.

THE FUTURE CAN BE EASILY PREDICTED IN RETROSPECT





THE CORN-LAW RHYMER

EBENEZER ELLIOTT

1798

At the age of 17, [Ebenezer Elliott](#)'s 1st poem, "The Vernal Walk," was in imitation of the poems of James Thompson (he had also been reading in Byron and the Romantic poets, and [Robert Southey](#)).

DO I HAVE YOUR ATTENTION? GOOD.



EBENEZER ELLIOTT

THE CORN-LAW RHYMER

1801



[Ebenezer Elliott](#)'s initial publication, the poem "The Vernal Walk."



THE CORN-LAW RHYMER

EBENEZER ELLIOTT

1806



[Ebenezer Elliott](#) got married with Frances “Fanny” Gartside. She had money, and this would be invested in the bridegroom’s father’s share of the iron foundry at Masbrough, but the foundry would do poorly and this investment would rather quickly dwindle to nothing. There would be a family of 13 children in this couple’s future, and a bankruptcy.

WHAT I’M WRITING IS TRUE BUT NEVER MIND
YOU CAN ALWAYS LIE TO YOURSELF



EBENEZER ELLIOTT

THE CORN-LAW RHYMER

1807



Birth of [Ebenezer Elliott](#)'s and Fannie Gartside Elliot's 1st child, Ebenezer Elliott.



THE CORN-LAW RHYMER

EBENEZER ELLIOTT

1808

 [Robert Southey](#)'s THE CHRONICLE OF THE CID.

[Ebenezer Elliott](#) wrote to [Southey](#) for advice on how to get published and Southey responded (they would correspond until 1824, and in 1823 they would meet each other in person).



At Bristol, England [Walter Savage Landor](#) caught up with [Southey](#), whom he had missed on a trip to the Lake District in the previous year. He also wrote a work “The Dun Cow” which was written in defence of his friend [Dr. Samuel Parr](#) who had been attacked in an anonymous work “Guy’s Porridge Pot,” which [Landor](#) was fierce to deny was any work of his. [Landor](#) felt impelled to participate in the Peninsular War. At the age of 33 he left England for Spain as a volunteer, to serve in the national army against [Napoléon Bonaparte](#). He landed at Corunna, introduced himself to the British envoy, offered 10,000 reals for the relief of Venturada, and set out to join the army of General Joaquín Blake y Joyes. However, in this he would be disappointed, for he would not be permitted to take part in any real action and found himself assigned to mere support roles, and then at Bilbao he almost got captured. A couple of months later when the Convention of Sintra brought an end to the campaign, [Landor](#) returned to England. The Spanish Government offered him its gratitude, and King Ferdinand awarded him the credentials of a Colonel in the Spanish Army. However, the King of England would restore the Jesuit Order and [Landor](#) would on account of this return his commission. Returning to England, he joined Wordsworth and [Southey](#) in denouncing this Convention of Sintra.

CHANGE IS ETERNITY, STASIS A FIGMENT



EBENEZER ELLIOTT

THE CORN-LAW RHYMER

1809



On the Isle of [Jersey](#), James Guillet was born to Charles William Guillet (1772-1809) and Marie Thoreau.


Birth of [Ebenezer Elliott](#)'s and Fannie Gartside Elliot's 2d child, Benjamin Garber Elliott.






THE CORN-LAW RHYMER

EBENEZER ELLIOTT

1811

 Birth of [Ebenezer Elliott](#)'s and Fannie Gartside Elliot's 3d child, Henry Elliott.

According to Simon Heffer's MORAL DESPERADO: A LIFE OF [THOMAS CARLYLE](#) (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1995), page 42:

In the ten years between the 1811  and 1821  censuses the population of Britain rose by 17%, from 12,000,000 to 14,000,000. Wages, which had risen steadily in real terms since the start of the Napoleonic Wars, were now beginning a downward progress that would not be stopped until after the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846 – three years after [Thomas Carlyle](#) had railed against the economic and social conditions in England in PAST AND PRESENT. The political establishment was unsteady, the King mad, his son the Prince Regent dissolute and disliked. High stamp duties, of 4d on a newspaper, limited the circulation of opinions hostile to the Tory government or Lord Liverpool. A rash of prosecutions for seditious libel, and for the defamation of the King and his ministers, also occurred in 1817,  as another means of encouraging conformity. A fall in demand immediately after the war led to a great rise in unemployment, exacerbated by the reduction in manpower of the army and navy. Sporadic rioting, and disturbances even among the middle classes, fed the Tory establishment's fear of the mob. In 1817 parliament suspended Habeas Corpus and passed bills forbidding potentially seditious meetings; this was two years before Peterloo and the Six Acts.



EBENEZER ELLIOTT

THE CORN-LAW RHYMER

1812



Charlotte Darkey Parkhurst ([“Charley” Parkhurst](#)) was born in New Hampshire. After being raised as an orphan, she would run away to Worcester by posing as a boy, and would then for the rest of her life work with horses while passing herself off as a man, “Charley” Parkhurst.

Birth of [Ebenezer Elliott](#)’s and Fannie Gartside Elliot’s 4th child, William Elliott.



THE CORN-LAW RHYMER

EBENEZER ELLIOTT

1813



[George Gordon, Lord Byron](#)'s THE GIAOUR and THE BRIDE OF ABYDOS were sensational successes; THE WALTZ (anonymous) was printed privately.

In Rotherham, Lord Byron met [Ebenezer Elliott](#).



EBENEZER ELLIOTT

THE CORN-LAW RHYMER

1814



Birth of [Ebenezer Elliott](#)'s and Fannie Gartside Elliot's 5th child, Charles Elliott.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE EFFECTS OF THE CORN LAWS, AND OF A RISE OR FALL IN THE PRICE OF CORN ON THE AGRICULTURE AND GENERAL WEALTH OF THE COUNTRY BY THE REV. T.R. MALTHUS, PROFESSOR OF POLITICAL ECONOMY AT THE EAST INDIA COLLEGE, HERTFORDSHIRE LONDON (printed for J. Johnson and Co., St. Paul's Church-Yard).


READ THE FULL TEXT




THE CORN-LAW RHYMER

EBENEZER ELLIOTT

1815

 Death of [Ebenezer Elliott](#)'s mother.

 AN INQUIRY INTO THE NATURE AND PROGRESS OF RENT, AND THE PRINCIPLES BY WHICH IT IS REGULATED BY REV. T.R. MALTHUS, PROFESSOR OF HISTORY AND POLITICAL ECONOMY IN THE EAST INDIA COLLEGE, HERTFORDSHIRE. LONDON, Printed for John Murray, Albemarle Street.

[READ THE FULL TEXT](#)

Also, the Reverend's THE GROUNDS OF AN OPINION ON THE POLICY OF RESTRICTING THE IMPORTATION OF FOREIGN CORN: INTENDED AS AN APPENDIX TO "OBSERVATIONS ON THE CORN LAW." London, Printed for John Murray, Albermarle Street, and J. Johnson and Co., St. Paul's Church Yard.

[READ THE FULL TEXT](#)



EBENEZER ELLIOTT

THE CORN-LAW RHYMER

1816




His wife's fortune gone, sunk into the black pit of his father's failing foundry, [Ebenezer Elliott](#) declared bankruptcy. For a period of time he would be homeless, not knowing where his next meal would be coming from. He would consider suicide.




THE CORN-LAW RHYMER

EBENEZER ELLIOTT

1819

 [Ebenezer Elliott](#) persuaded his wife Fannie Gartside Elliot's sisters to invest in him, and initiated a business dealing in iron in Sheffield. This would turn out well.

Birth of [Ebenezer Elliott](#)'s and Fannie Gartside Elliot's 6th child, Edwin Elliott, and 7th child, Frances Green Elliott.

 January 30, Saturday: Poet Laureate [Robert Southey](#) wrote a long and carefully considered letter to [Ebenezer Elliott](#), pointing out faults in the poem *Night*.

[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)

EBENEZER ELLIOTT

THE CORN-LAW RHYMER

1821

→ Birth of [Ebenezer Elliott](#)'s and Fannie Gartside Elliot's 8th child, Fanny Ann Elliott.

When the [potato](#) crop again failed in Ireland as it had in 1800-1801 and in 1816-1819, the nature of [Irish](#) emigration began to change drastically. Previously the immigrants to America had come from families of Protestants in the North who could afford the transatlantic fare. Suddenly the British government was organizing mass emigration from the South in order to avert [famine](#) in the counties of Mayo, Clare, Kerry, and Cork. Some 50,000 would starve or die of starvation-related diseases from Donegal to Youghal (the years of the West Ireland potato famines: 1739, 1816, 1821, 1822, 1831, 1835, 1836, mid-1840s). The goal of the Colonial Office was to provide 2,000 "assisted places" per year. At first the poor Irish Catholics assumed that the grim ships were "transportation", taking their friends and relatives to what would amount to penal servitude in Australia — which, given the climate of British opinion in regard to the Irish as would be witnessed for instance soon in the early published attitudes of Thomas Carlyle, would not in those times one would have to acknowledge have been an altogether unrealistic suspicion.



The Reverend [Andrew Bigelow](#)'s LEAVES FROM A JOURNAL; OR SKETCHES OF RAMBLES IN SOME PARTS OF NORTH BRITAIN AND IRELAND. CHIEFLY IN THE YEAR 1817 (Boston: Wells and Lilly, Court-Street).¹

TRAVELS OF ANDREW (I)

(He also published a farewell sermon he had preached at his new church in Eastport, Maine.)




1. If you bet that in the course of these foreign travels the good Reverend had learned nothing about prospects of famine....



THE CORN-LAW RHYMER

EBENEZER ELLIOTT

According to Simon Heffer's MORAL DESPERADO: A LIFE OF THOMAS CARLYLE (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1995), page 42:

In the ten years between the 1811  and 1821  censuses the population of Britain rose by 17%, from 12,000,000 to 14,000,000. Wages, which had risen steadily in real terms since the start of the Napoleonic Wars, were now beginning a downward progress that would not be stopped until after the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846 – three years after [Thomas Carlyle](#) had railed against the economic and social conditions in England in PAST AND PRESENT. The political establishment was unsteady, the King mad, his son the Prince Regent dissolute and disliked. High stamp duties, of 4d on a newspaper, limited the circulation of opinions hostile to the Tory government or Lord Liverpool. A rash of prosecutions for seditious libel, and for the defamation of the King and his ministers, also occurred in 1817,  as another means of encouraging conformity. A fall in demand immediately after the war led to a great rise in unemployment, exacerbated by the reduction in manpower of the army and navy. Sporadic rioting, and disturbances even among the middle classes, fed the Tory establishment's fear

Soon, however, letters would begin to arrive from the new continent, explaining that in fact they had not been taken around the world to Australia, that there were not very many [anti-Catholic](#) riots or lynchings going on in America, or at least not at that moment, that it was relatively easy to slip across the border from the United States of America to freedom in Canada, that it was relatively easy and risk-free for white people to walk away from the indenture systems then in effect in the USA and assume new identities, etc.

Population Trends

| | England / Wales | Ireland |
|------|------------------|--|
| 1821 | 12,000,000 | 6,800,000 |
| 1831 | 13,900,000 | 7,770,000 |
| 1841 | 15,920,000 | 8,180,000 |
| 1845 | about 16,700,000 | about 8,300,000 (blight, then famine, fever, and emigration) |
| 1851 | 17,930,000 | 6,550,000 |
| 1861 | 20,070,000 | 5,800,000 |
| 1871 | 31,629,299 | 5,410,000 |
| 1881 | 35,026,108 | 5,170,000 |



EBENEZER ELLIOTT

THE CORN-LAW RHYMER



THE CORN-LAW RHYMER

EBENEZER ELLIOTT

1822



Death of [Ebenezer Elliott](#)'s father.



EBENEZER ELLIOTT

THE CORN-LAW RHYMER

1823

 Birth of [Ebenezer Elliott](#)'s and Fannie Gartside Elliot's 9th child, John Gartside Elliott.

[Ebenezer Elliott](#) finally was able to meet [Robert Southey](#).





THE CORN-LAW RHYMER

EBENEZER ELLIOTT

1825



Birth of [Ebenezer Elliott](#)'s and Fannie Gartside Elliot's 10th child, Norah Elliott.

Tom Bell the Wild West desperado was born as [Thomas J. Hodges](#) in Rome, Tennessee.²

2. Tom Bell the colonial American confidence man was a very different person from this Wild West outlaw of the 19th Century. For the 18th-Century colonial rogue, refer to Steven C. Bullock's "A Mumper among the Gentle: Tom Bell, Colonial Confidence Man" in [The William and Mary Quarterly](#), 3rd Ser., Vol. 55, No. 2. (Apr., 1998), pp. 231-258. For the 19th-Century outlaw, see Drago, Sinclair. ROAD AGENTS AND TRAIN ROBBERS: HALF A CENTURY OF WESTERN BANDITRY (NY: Dodd, 1973); Sifakis, Carl. ENCYCLOPEDIA OF AMERICAN CRIME (NY: Facts on File Inc., 1982); Secrest, William B. CALIFORNIA DESPERADOES – STORIES OF EARLY OUTLAWS IN THEIR OWN WORDS.



EBENEZER ELLIOTT

THE CORN-LAW RHYMER

1829



[Ebenezer Elliott](#)'s business in Sheffield as an iron merchant and steel manufacturer had become prosperous.
His The VILLAGE PATRIARCH.



THE CORN-LAW RHYMER

EBENEZER ELLIOTT

1830



[Ebenezer Elliott](#) initiated the 1st society in opposition to the Corn Laws in the United Kingdom, the Sheffield Mechanics' Anti-Bread Tax Society. His long poem, THE RANTER.

VISIT HIS INTERNET HOME PAGE



EBENEZER ELLIOTT

THE CORN-LAW RHYMER

1831



[Ebenezer Elliott](#)'s CORN LAW RHYMES campaigned against the landowners who dominated the government, stifled competition, and kept the price of bread high.




THE CORN-LAW RHYMER

EBENEZER ELLIOTT

1832

 A Reform Act in regard to the Corn Laws, sponsored by [Ebenezer Elliott](#), was enacted by the British Parliament.

 July: [Thomas Carlyle](#)'s article on [Ebenezer Elliott](#) appeared in the [Edinburgh Review](#). The poet was granted points for sincerity and impact but his poetry was noticed to be imitative of the style of others, his political philosophy was considered to be preposterous, and he was condemned as possessing neither a sense of proportion nor a sense of humor.


“Conversations of [Lord Byron](#) with the Countess of Blessington” began publication in [New Monthly Magazine](#) (installments from July 1832 to December 1833).

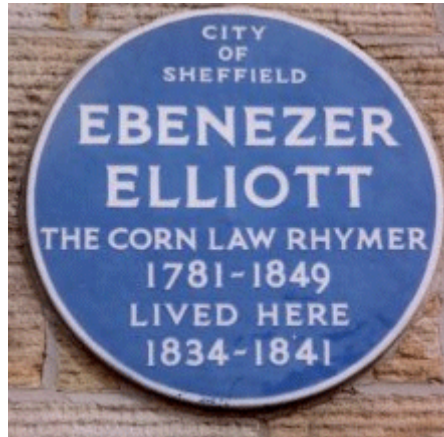


EBENEZER ELLIOTT

THE CORN-LAW RHYMER

1834

 [Ebenezer Elliott](#) removed to rural Upperthorpe near Sheffield. There he would sponsor the creation of a Sheffield Anti-Corn Law Society and set up a Sheffield Mechanics' Institute.





THE CORN-LAW RHYMER

EBENEZER ELLIOTT

1835



From this year into 1835, the three volumes of [Ebenezer Elliott](#)'s THE SPLENDID VILLAGE; CORN-LAW RHYMES, AND OTHER POEMS.


VISIT HIS INTERNET HOME PAGE



EBENEZER ELLIOTT

THE CORN-LAW RHYMER

1837

 After four failed attempts, [Benjamin Disraeli](#) was elected to the House of Commons as a Conservative (Tory) MP for Maidstone. He would oppose repeal of the Corn Laws which taxed British imports of grain. His VENETIA.



[Ebenezer Elliott](#)'s business again failed, and again he lost a great deal of money. His attitude was that it was all due to those darned Corn Laws.



THE CORN-LAW RHYMER

EBENEZER ELLIOTT

1838

The Chartists presented their 1st petition, with [Ebenezer Elliott](#) participating in their Great Public Meeting at Westminster as the delegate from Sheffield.³

In Trafalgar Square, the National Gallery opened.

The Royal Exchange burned down.

Regent's Park was opened to the public.

An experimental wood pavement was laid in Oxford-street.

LONDON

3. From this year into 1849 would be the heyday of Chartism, a working-class movement for the extension of the franchise. The Chartists' 6-point charter demanded universal suffrage, secret ballot, annual elections, payment of Members, no property qualification for MPs, and equal electoral districts. He would be one of the leaders of Chartism in Sheffield, until the movement began to advocate violence. He would abandon Chartism when it would cease to agitate for repeal of the Corn Laws.



EBENEZER ELLIOTT

THE CORN-LAW RHYMER

1839

In America, volumes 3 and 4 of [Thomas Carlyle](#)'s CRITICAL AND MISCELLANEOUS ESSAYS were being put through the presses:

MISC. ESSAYS, VOL. III
MISC. ESSAYS, VOL. IV

Copies of these volumes would of course be in [Henry Thoreau](#)'s personal library.

The Chartist petition presented in the previous year having gotten exactly nowhere, a "charter" of political reforms was presented to Parliament by workers and was likewise rejected. [Ebenezer Elliott](#) renounced Chartism. A pamphlet entitled CHARTISM was being produced in England:



[[Carlyle](#)'s] "might is right" argument presupposes ultimately benevolent and uncorrupt aims behind the might; those reading Carlyle now find it hard to share such assumptions, as indeed many of his contemporaries did. He justified his view by saying that a purely brutal conquest would never last, but would be flung out; in modern times, the fate of Nazism and Stalinism supports his view, and the Terror in France had proved it to him. The true strong man, for that reason, was always wise; his strength lay in the soul rather than the body, and was drawn from God.

One true inheritor of this tradition of thought:



"I cannot see why man should not be just as cruel as nature."

— [Adolf Hitler](#)



PROTO-NAZISM



THE CORN-LAW RHYMER

EBENEZER ELLIOTT

[Charles Darwin](#) saw the raw effects of this Carlylean reasoning process and the alleged or eponymous founder of “Social Darwinism” was at once fascinated and bemused — and repelled.⁴



The Fuegians ... struck Darwin as more like animals than men.... Thoreau’s single overt citation of Darwin in WALDEN refers to one of Darwin’s few concessions to the Fuegians’ superior powers, their adaptation to the cold climate (WALDEN, pages 12-13). This is but one among many spots where WALDEN undermines the hierarchies of civilization/barbarity (the villagers are bizarre penance-performing Brahmins) and humanity/animal (the villagers as prairie dogs, himself competing with squirrels for fall forage). Such instances of undermining do not reflect Thoreau’s attempt to quarrel with Darwin as much as Thoreau’s desire to accentuate tendencies already present in Darwin and other travelers’ accounts. ...Darwin, like Thoreau albeit to a lesser degree, was prepared to relativize moral distinctions between “advanced” and “backward” cultures and between human and animal estates.

“It is impossible to reflect on the state of the American continent without astonishment. Formerly it must have swarmed with great monsters; now we find mere pygmies compared with the antecedent, allied races.”

4. The guy who was absolutely fascinated by this hatemongering was not Darwin, a man who still had hope for human decency, but the headmaster of Rugby, Dr. Thomas Arnold.





EBENEZER ELLIOTT

THE CORN-LAW RHYMER

1840

THE POETICAL WORKS OF [EBENEZER ELLIOTT](#), THE CORN-LAW RHYMER (Edinburgh: W. Tait).⁵

ELLIOTT'S POETICAL WORKS

5. A copy of this edition would be presented to Henry Thoreau, as a gift, by [Waldo Emerson](#), and Thoreau would refer to it in his journal for August 4, 1841. Refer to Rusk, ed. EMERSON'S *LETTERS* 2.433.



THE CORN-LAW RHYMER

EBENEZER ELLIOTT

1841

As a way to protest against repeal of the Corn Laws, [Edward George Earle Bulwer](#) retired as a politician. This, together with his friendship with [Benjamin Disraeli](#), would cause him to become a Tory. His NIGHT AND MORNING. He started [Monthly Chronicle](#), a semi-scientific magazine. He would spend some years in continental travel, not reentering the political arena until 1852.

[Ebenezer Elliott](#) retired wealthy and moved from Sheffield to spend his retirement on Hargate Hill at Great Houghton near Barnsley.



At this point he wrote a fragment of autobiography.



Hargate Hill, the Residence of Ebenezer Elliott.



EBENEZER ELLIOTT

THE CORN-LAW RHYMER



Aug. 4. Wednesday. My pen is a lever which, in proportion as the near end stirs me further within, the further end reaches to a greater depth in the reader.

Nawshawtucl. — Far in the east I read Nature's *Corn Law Rhymes*.⁶ Here, in sight of Wachusett and these rivers and woods, my mind goes singing to itself of other themes than taxation. The rush sparrow sings still unintelligible, as from beyond a depth in me which I have not fathomed, where my future lies folded up. I hear several faint notes, quite outside me, which populate the waste.

This is such fresh and flowing weather, as if the waves of the morning lead subsided over the day.

6. THE POETICAL WORKS OF [EBENEZER ELLIOTT](#), THE CORN-LAW RHYMER (Edinburgh: W. Tait) had been presented to Henry Thoreau, as a gift, by Waldo Emerson, at some point subsequent to its publication in 1840. Refer to Rusk, ed. EMERSON'S *LETTERS* 2.433.



THE CORN-LAW RHYMER

EBENEZER ELLIOTT

1842

Alexis de Tocqueville was actively engaged at this point in debates in the French Chamber of Deputies on issues such as the slave trade, Algerian colonization and reforms and the question of succession after Louis-Phillipe's death, in which he favors an elective regency. Meanwhile, Friend [Joseph Sturge](#)'s *A VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES IN 1841* provided insight into an area of life for American women which had been totally ignored by Tocqueville and Gustave de Beaumont, the area of reform and abolition. In addition, he included comments about mill workers in Lowell and a sample article written by a female mill worker in the *Lowell Offering*, the mill newspaper.

A VISIT TO THE US IN 1841

For several years Sturge would be devoting himself to securing the extension of suffrage and to the repeal of the British import duties on grain known as the Corn Laws.



EBENEZER ELLIOTT

THE CORN-LAW RHYMER

Lecture Season: The Winter Lecture Season at the [Odeon Theatre](#) at the corner of Federal and Franklin streets in Boston:

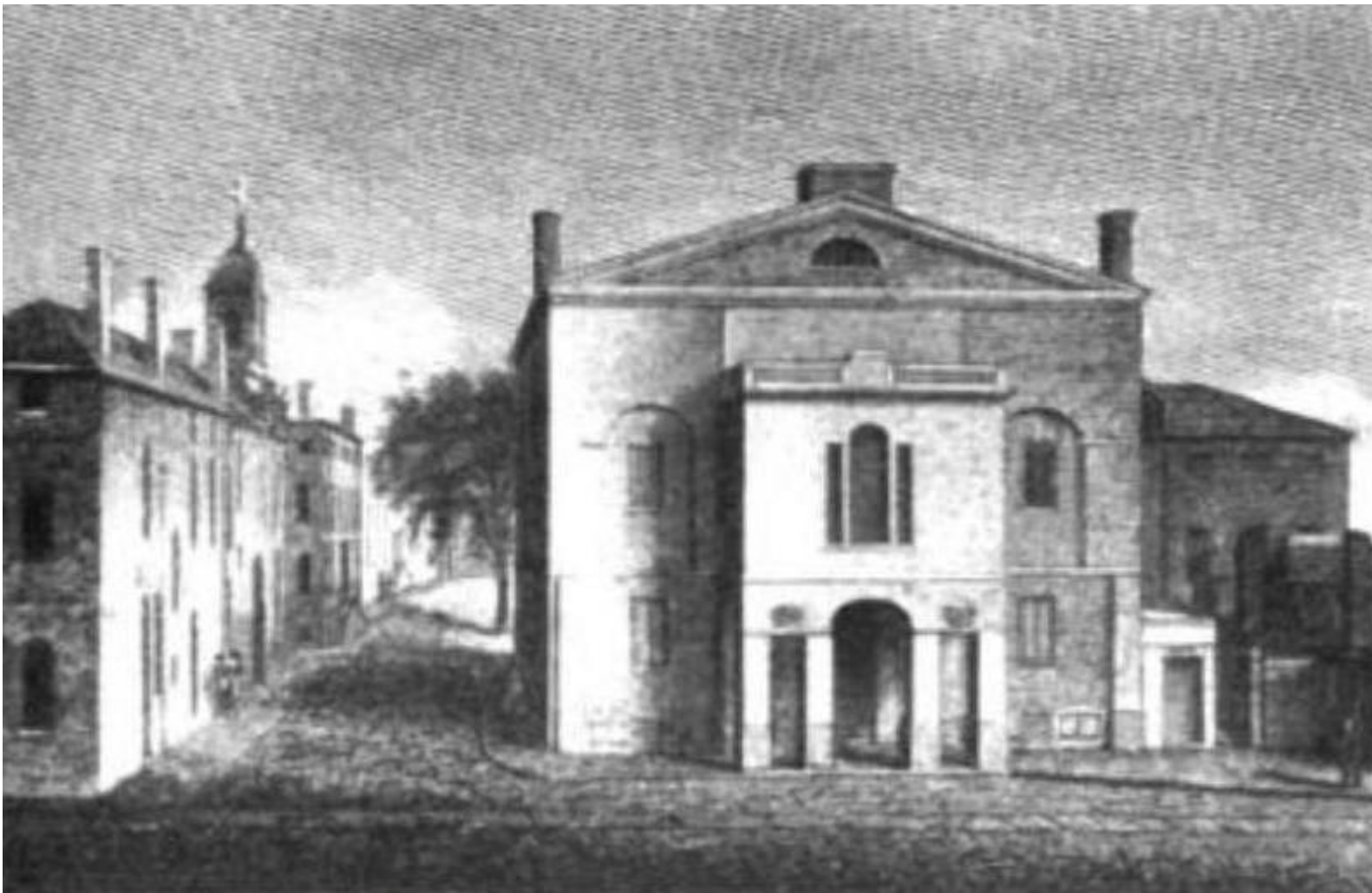
4th Season of [The Lowell Institute](#)

Prof. J. Lovering, A.M., [Astronomy](#)
12 lectures (then repeated, total 24)

Prof. Jared Sparks, LL.D., *American History*
12 lectures

Prof. J. Walker, D.D., *Natural Religion*
12 lectures

Prof. B. Silliman, LL.D., *Chemistry*
12 lectures (then repeated, total 24)



The 14th course of lectures offered by the [Salem Lyceum](#) may be viewed on the following screen.



THE CORN-LAW RHYMER

EBENEZER ELLIOTT

(click here)



EBENEZER ELLIOTT

THE CORN-LAW RHYMER

The Salem Lyceum — 14th Season

John Quincy Adams
Government

[William Mitchell](#)
Astronomy, Comets (1st lecture)

[William Mitchell](#)
Astronomy, Comets (2nd lecture)

Humphrey Moore
March of Mind

Reverend George B. Cheever of Salem
Gothic Architecture

L.F. Tasistro
Master Spirits of English Poetry

Benjamin Sears
Germany

Charles Francis Adams, Sr.
Shakspeare (1st lecture)

Charles Francis Adams, Sr.
Shakspeare (2nd lecture)

Dr. Fitch
Music as a Fine Art

Henry Giles
Byron (1st lecture)

Henry Giles
Byron (2nd lecture)

George Bancroft
Spirit of the Age

[Richard Henry Dana, Jr.](#)
Woman

James E. Murdock
Human Voice, with Illustrations

Edwin Jocelyn of Salem
Spirit of Teaching

[Richard Henry Dana, Jr.](#)
Desdemona

John C. Park
Character of the Pilgrims

George H. Colton
American Indians

James E. Murdock
The Passions

Henry Giles
[Elliott](#), *the Corn Law Rhymer*



THE CORN-LAW RHYMER

EBENEZER ELLIOTT

1845

In England, in the face of famine in Ireland, the Corn Laws came under the most urgent analysis. The purpose behind the Corn Laws had been to keep the price of home-grown grain up by the imposition of duties on imported grain, in order to assure to English farmers a minimum and profitable price and therefore encourage the local farm economy. Militarily and diplomatically, a nation is better off if it can feed its citizenry by means of local food production. It was recognized of course that elevating the price of bread was a burden on factory workers and operatives who needed to purchase what they would eat.

HDT

WHAT?

INDEX

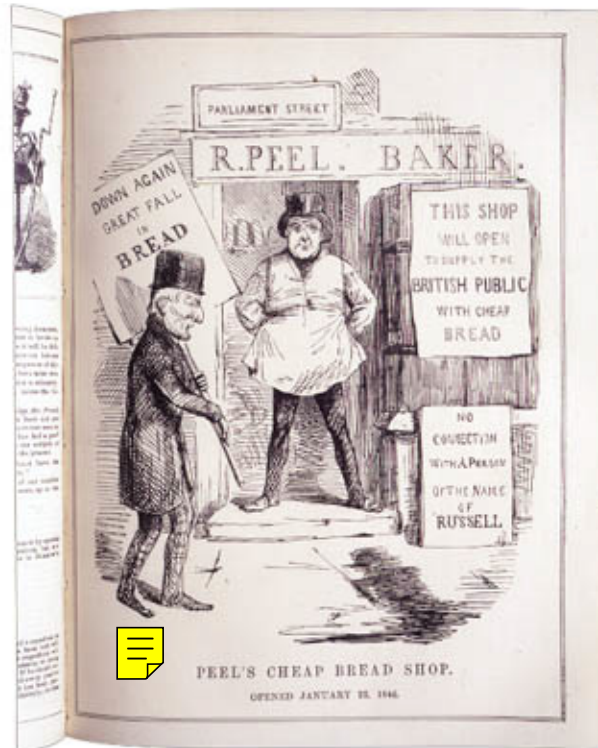
EBENEZER ELLIOTT

THE CORN-LAW RHYMER

1846

January 22, Thursday: The final of the 7 lectures in [Waldo Emerson](#)'s 1845/1846 lecture series in [Boston](#) (this would become the initial lecture of the series "Goethe, or the Writer").

England's efforts to repeal the Corn Laws so that the people might be fed, and [Arthur Wellesley, Duke of Wellington](#)'s opposition to such crowd-pleasing antics, gave rise to an amusing cartoon:





THE CORN-LAW RHYMER

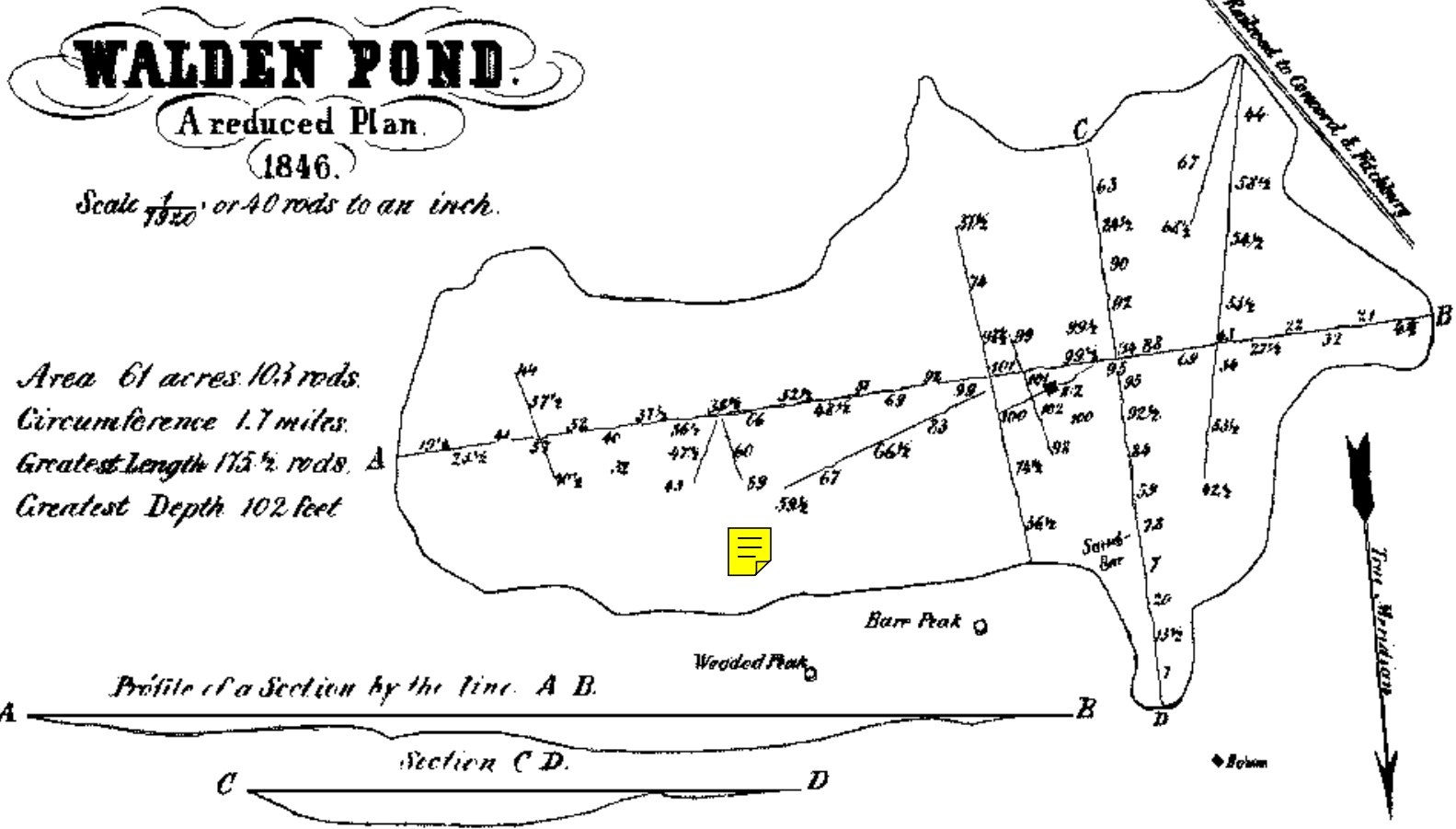
EBENEZER ELLIOTT



EBENEZER ELLIOTT

THE CORN-LAW RHYMER

To provide a demonstration of his journeyman skills as a surveyor, [Henry Thoreau](#) did a survey of [Walden Pond](#):



(he would have this tipped into his bound volume of his lyceum lectures, [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#), now between pages 285 and 287 per the current Princeton numbering).

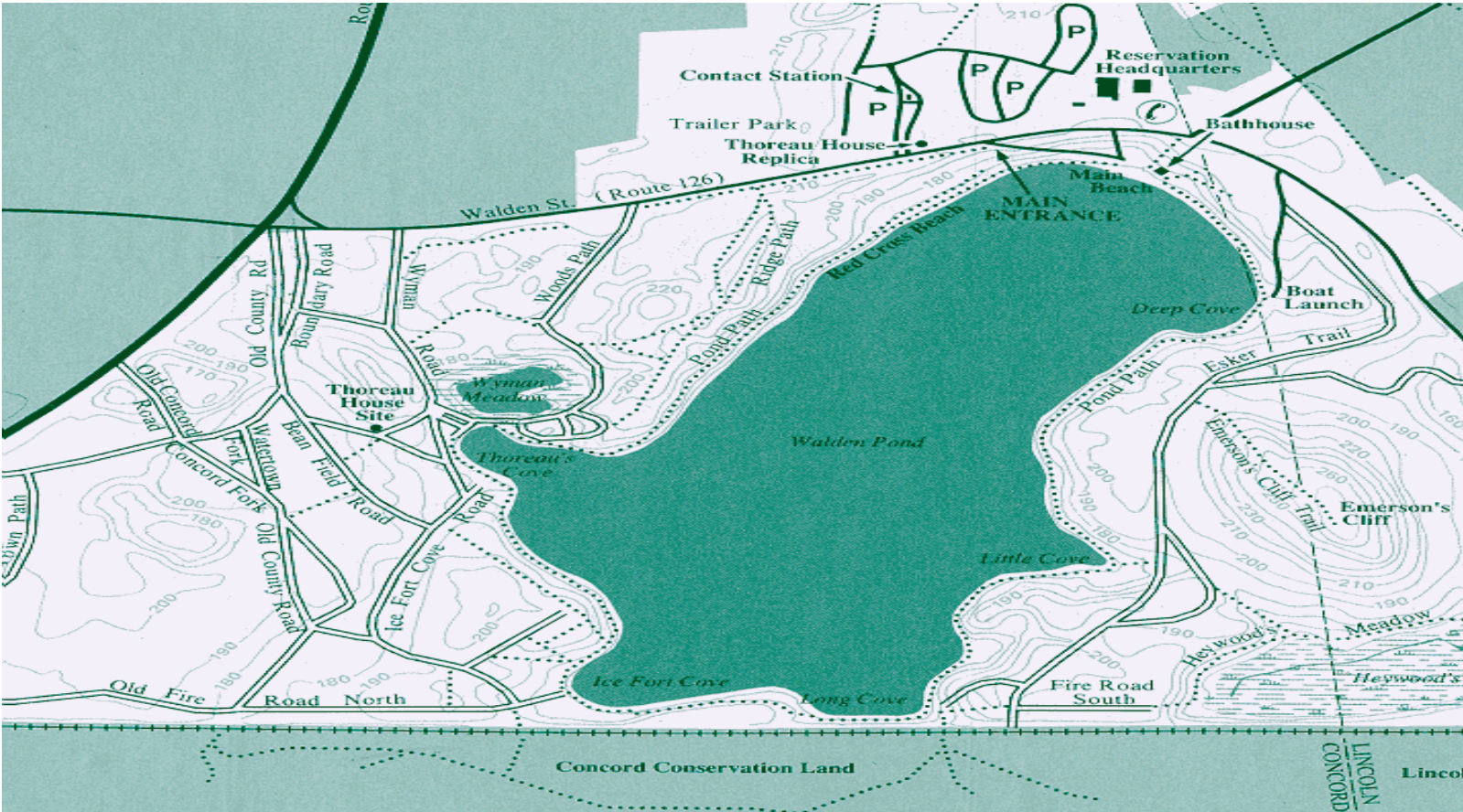
HDT

WHAT?

INDEX

THE CORN-LAW RHYMER

EBENEZER ELLIOTT





EBENEZER ELLIOTT

THE CORN-LAW RHYMER



WALDEN: As I was desirous to recover the long lost bottom of Walden Pond, I surveyed it carefully, before the ice broke up, early in '46, with compass and chain and sounding line. There have been many stories told about the bottom, or rather no bottom, of this pond, which certainly had no foundation for themselves. It is remarkable how long men will believe in the bottomlessness of a pond without taking the trouble to sound it. I have visited two such Bottomless Ponds in one walk in this neighborhood. Many have believed that Walden reached quite through to the other side of the globe. Some who have lain flat on the ice for a long time, looking down through the illusive medium, perchance with watery eyes into the bargain, and driven to hasty conclusions by the fear of catching cold in their breasts, have seen vast holes "into which a load of hay might be driven," if there were any body to drive it, the undoubted source of the Styx and entrance to the Infernal Regions from these parts. Others have gone down from the village with a "fifty-six" and a wagon load of inch rope, but yet have failed to find any bottom; for while the "fifty-six" was resting by the way, they we paying out the rope in the vain attempt to fathom their truly immeasurable capacity for marvellousness. But I can assure my readers that Walden has a reasonably tight bottom at a not unreasonable, though at an unusual, depth. I fathomed it easily with a cod-line and a stone weighing about a pound and a half, and could tell accurately when the stone left the bottom, by having to pull so much harder before the water got underneath to help me. The greatest depth was exactly one hundred and two feet; to which may be added the five feet which it has risen since, making one hundred and seven. This is a remarkable depth for so small an area; yet not an inch of it can be spared by the imagination. What if all ponds were shallow? Would it not react on the minds of men? I am thankful that this pond was made deep and pure for a symbol. While men believe in the infinite some ponds will be thought to be bottomless.



THE CORN-LAW RHYMER

EBENEZER ELLIOTT

(Various bores of cannon were cast at the Royal Arsenal at Woolwich, England, to discharge various sizes of cast-iron ball. There were 6-pounders, 9-pounders, 12-pounders, 30-pound carronades with trunions, 32-pounders, 56-pounders, and 68-pounders. The heavier of these guns were of course not suitable for ships, but were useful for harbor defense. We have a record of a 56-pound cannonball being used in a shotput competition:

THE 56-POUND SHOTPUT

That “56-pounder” at the end of a heavy rope, used by Concord folks in an attempt to sound out the bottomlessness of Walden Pond, had been one of those left over from shore defense. The humor of this is that they would have obtained a more sensitive and accurate reading by merely tying an ordinary 1-pound rock to the end of an ordinary codline — the vast amount of excess weight had only made their trial that much more inaccurate, in that after this massive cannonball was already resting on the bottom the necessarily thick and heavy wet rope would have been by its own weight continuing to draw itself downward, only to coil around the iron resting in the bottom muck.)

[TIMELINE OF WALDEN](#)

View [Henry Thoreau](#)'s personal working drafts of his surveys courtesy of AT&T and the Concord Free Public Library:

http://www.concordlibrary.org/scollect/Thoreau_Surveys/Thoreau_Surveys.htm

(The official copy of this survey of course had become the property of the person or persons who had hired this Concord town surveyor to do their surveying work during the 19th Century. Such materials have yet to be recovered.)

View this particular personal working draft of a survey in fine detail:

http://www.concordlibrary.org/scollect/Thoreau_surveys/133a.htm

http://www.concordlibrary.org/scollect/Thoreau_surveys/133b.htm



EBENEZER ELLIOTT

THE CORN-LAW RHYMER

1846

The English parliament decided to do away with the “Corn Laws,” or, as [Ebenezer Elliott](#) liked to term it, the “bread-tax.”



THE CORN-LAW RHYMER

EBENEZER ELLIOTT

1847

One of [Ebenezer Elliott](#)'s last poems, "The People's Commonwealth," was written to be sung (it is usually sung to the tune "Commonwealth").

The People's Anthem

When wilt thou save the people?
Oh, God of mercy! when?
Not kings and lords, but nations!
Not thrones and crowns, but men!
Flowers of thy heart, oh, God, are they!
Let them not pass, like weeds, away!
Their heritage a sunless day!
God! save the people!



EBENEZER ELLIOTT

THE CORN-LAW RHYMER

1848

[Ebenezer Elliott](#)'s poem to be sung, "The People's Commonwealth" (it was usually sung to the tune "Commonwealth"), was published in [Tait's Edinburgh Review](#). Some churches would reject hymnals containing this verse, considering it to be derogatory of God.

The People's Anthem

When wilt thou save the people?
Oh, God of mercy! when?
Not kings and lords, but nations!
Not thrones and crowns, but men!
Flowers of thy heart, oh, God, are they!
Let them not pass, like weeds, away!
Their heritage a sunless day!
God! save the people!



THE CORN-LAW RHYMER

EBENEZER ELLIOTT

1849

Official abolition of the English “Corn Laws,” or, as [Ebenezer Elliott](#) had favored referring to them, the “bread-tax.” In the final period of his life, despite this political victory, the poet was in pain and and preoccupied with his imminent death. He prepared his own epitaph:

The Poet’s Epitaph

Stop, Mortal! Here thy brother lies,
The Poet of the Poor
His books were rivers, woods and skies,
The meadow and the moor,
His teachers were the torn hearts’ wail,
The tyrant, and the slave,
The street, the factory, the jail,
The palace – and the grave!
The meanest thing, earth’s feeblest worm,
He fear’d to scorn or hate;
And honour’d in a peasant’s form
The equal of the great.
But if he loved the rich who make
The poor man’s little more,
Ill could he praise the rich who take
From plunder’d labour’s store
A hand to do, a head to plan,
A heart to feel and dare –
Tell man’s worst foes, here lies the man
Who drew them as they are.

[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)

EBENEZER ELLIOTT

THE CORN-LAW RHYMER

December 1, Saturday: A less-than-lifesize statue of Aristides the Sophist, the author of *HEROIC LOGI*, was unveiled in Louisburg Square on top of [Boston](#)'s Beacon Hill. (What was this, some parlor ornament that some Boston richie was trying to find a decent way to dispose of?)

In front of Harvard Medical College, the medical school of [Harvard College](#), a surly mob of people had assembled who well knew that the students therein had been paying graverobbers (termed humorously "resurrectionists" at the time) to keep them supplied them with the fresh corpses of their relatives, for use in dissection.

DIGGING UP THE DEAD

Inside, the scorched torso and one of the thighs of [Doctor George Parkman](#) were being discovered at the bottom of an old tea chest packed full of chemical equipment. None of these downtown denizens gave a damn for Doctor Parkman the slumlord — but what an excellent opportunity this was to agitate to prevent the medical students and faculty from stealing and defiling any more bodies of poor people!

Since his obtaining enough money to retire from business in 1841, [Ebenezer Elliott](#) had been living quietly at Great Houghton, near Barnsley. On this day after long illness and depression, he died at the age of 68. The body would be placed in Darfield churchyard.



[John Greenleaf Whittier](#) would write a poem about him:

Elliott

Hands off! thou tithe-fat plunderer! play
No trick of priestcraft here!
Back, puny lordling! darest thou lay
A hand on Elliott's bier?
Alive, your rank and pomp, as dust,
Beneath his feet he trod:
He knew the locust swarm that cursed
The harvest-fields of God.

On these pale lips, the smothered thought



THE CORN-LAW RHYMER

EBENEZER ELLIOTT

Which England's millions feel,
A fierce and fearful splendour caught,
As from his forge the steel.
Strong-armed as Thor, — and a shower of fire
His smitten anvil flung;
God's curse, Earth's wrong, dumb Hunger's ire,
He gave them all a tongue!

Then let the poor man's horny hands
Bear up the mighty dead,
And labour's swart and stalwart bands,
Behind as mourners tread.
Leave cant and craft their baptized bounds,
Leave rank its minister floor;
Give England's green and daisied grounds
The poet of the poor!

Lay down upon his Sheaf's green verge
That brave old heart of oak,
With fitting dirge from sounding forge,
And pall of furnace smoke!
Where whirls the stone its dizzy rounds,
And axe and sledge are swung,
And, timing to their stormy sounds,
His stormy lays are sung.

There let the peasant's step be heard,
The grinder chant his rhyme;
Nor patron's praise nor dainty word
Befits the man or time.
No soft lament nor dreamer's sigh
For him whose words were bread, —
The Runic rhyme and spell whereby
The foodless poor were fed!

Pile up thy tombs of rank and pride,
O England, as thou wilt!
With pomp to nameless worth denied,
Emblazon titled guilt!
No part or lot in these we claim;
But, o'er the sounding wave,
A common right to Elliott's name,
A freehold in his grave!

[Thomas Carlyle](#)'s OCCASIONAL DISCOURSE ON THE NEGRO QUESTION (the essay which would in 1853 be reissued under the title initially planned, OCCASIONAL DISCOURSE ON THE NIGGER QUESTION) appeared in [Fraser's Magazine](#). The author would be outraged at the outrage expressed by his readers.

Even more of a "Teutomaniac" than the history professor Thomas Arnold, [Carlyle](#) asserted that "if the Black gentleman is born to be a servant, and, in fact, is useful in God's creation only as a servant, then let him hire not by the month, but by a very much longer term."⁷

7. You know, actually, what this sort of "humor" reminds me of? I once sighted a photograph of a Southern lynching, in which the dead man's black feet are protruding into the frame of the photograph from above, while all the white guys and their wives and children are clustering around to have their group portrait made. And from the big toe of the hanged man is hanging a piece of this Thomas Carlylish humor in the form of one of those funny little hotel room signs that you put on your outside doorknob, proclaiming something on the order of "Please do not disturb my slumbers."



EBENEZER ELLIOTT

THE CORN-LAW RHYMER

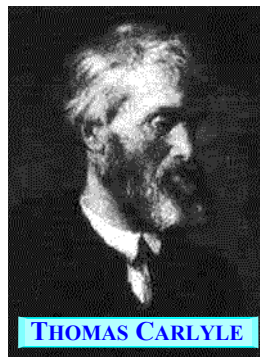
According to Simon Heffer's *MORAL DESPERADO: A LIFE OF THOMAS CARLYLE* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1995), pages 276-7:

It is the form and tone, rather than the actual message, that did most of the damage. Carlyle constructs a brilliant parody of an Exeter Hall meeting, with an unnamed speaker spelling out unpalatable truths to an audience driven deeper and deeper into shock. Philanthropy in general he parodies as "the Universal Abolition of Pain Association," which is at risk of turning into a "Sluggard and Scoundrel Protection Society." Carlyle did not feel he was attacking the blacks; his targets were the liberals who were destroying them. This was not, though, how his audience saw it.

He was so open to interpretation because of the callous, heartless and brutally sarcastic language he used. He talks of the emancipated blacks being like the Irish, with a land of plenty they are refusing to exploit, because no one is there to guide them to the greater happiness that exists beyond eating pumpkins. The essay is also an attack on the "dismal science" of economics; the blacks were not more constructively employed because it was in no one's economic interest to do so, just as it was not in Ireland.... He cannot envision the black man being born for any other purpose than to serve; and while he may abhor slavery, he wonders whether being bound for life to a master in other circumstances is not the most humane and appropriate way to deal with the "emancipated," and ease them into civilization. To apply the principles of *laissez-faire* to them was, he argued, cruel, as they had no means to survive on their own. Again (and the allegorical is never far away), all this was true of Ireland, as he saw it.

His strictures about what actually constitutes slavery cannot be easily dismissed, and reflect directly his Irish experiences. "You cannot abolish slavery by act of parliament," he claims, "but can only abolish the **name** of it, which is very little!"

I encounter these materials myself with mixed feelings, since it is my suspicion that Carlyle may well have been correct in his assertion that a society cannot eliminate a scourge such as human chattel bondage that has grown from the bottom up, by any techniques which proceed merely from the top down. In fact here in the USA, when we would enact the XIIIth Amendment to our federal Constitution in 1865 in the indicated top-down manner, we would not abolish slavery so much as abolish the **name** of it, exactly as specified here by Carlyle.





THE CORN-LAW RHYMER

EBENEZER ELLIOTT

For in fact the amendment initially ratified by $\frac{2}{3}$ ds of our state legislatures, including by now ratification even by the sovereign state of Mississippi, does not define precisely what might constitute a “[slave](#),” or “[slavery](#),” or “[enslavement](#),” nor does it proscribe whatever these entities might in some manner eventually be decided to be, but instead it merely extends to the federal congress the authority to enact legislation defining and proscribing these undefined entities, and criminalizing and punishing a certain range of abusive conduct, thus effectively forbidding the other two arms of our federal government, the executive arm and the judicial arm, forever from proscribing or punishing these undefined entities — and indeed, subsequent to this amendment, much as we hate to contemplate this, our federal government has never ever enacted any such proscription, and there has never been any such punishment. In fact in our nation slavery is as unassailable during this Year of Our Lord 2010 as it had been, say, in the year 1810. What a field day of sarcasm a 20th-Century Carlyle would have with us!

Documentation of the [international slave trade](#), per W.E. Burghardt Du Bois: “Report of the Secretary of the Navy.” –HOUSE EXECUTIVE DOCUMENT, 31 Cong. 1 sess. III. pt. 1, No. 5, pt. 1, pp. 427-8.



EBENEZER ELLIOTT

THE CORN-LAW RHYMER

1850

Two posthumous volumes of the work of [Ebenezer Elliott](#), MORE PROSE AND VERSE BY THE CORN-LAW RHYMER, [EBENEZER ELLIOTT](#). Two biographies of the poet appeared, one by John Watkins, a son-in-law, and the other by January Searle (G.S. Phillips).

Elliott did not sing, but scream; he did not lament, but blaspheme: his verses were curses showered right and left with indiscriminate frenzy. No matter: they stirred the heart of the multitude, and roused the curiosity of the refined.

— CHAMBERS' PAPERS FOR THE PEOPLE, 1850.

VISIT HIS INTERNET HOME PAGE

February: An obituary for [Ebenezer Elliott](#) appeared in the [Gentleman's Magazine](#).

HDT

WHAT?

INDEX

THE CORN-LAW RHYMER

EBENEZER ELLIOTT

1854

A bronze statue of [Ebenezer Elliott](#) by Neville Northey Burnard, paid for by the people of Sheffield and Rotherham, was erected in Sheffield marketplace at a cost of £600.





EBENEZER ELLIOTT

THE CORN-LAW RHYMER

1874

The bronze statue of [Ebenezer Elliott](#) that had been positioned in 1854 in Sheffield marketplace was shifted to a less busy location, in Sheffield's Weston Park.





THE CORN-LAW RHYMER

EBENEZER ELLIOTT

1876

A new edition of [Ebenezer Elliott](#)'s poetical works in two volumes by a son, Edwin Elliott, Rector of St. John's, Antigua.

“MAGISTERIAL HISTORY” IS FANTASIZING: HISTORY IS CHRONOLOGY



EBENEZER ELLIOTT

THE CORN-LAW RHYMER

COPYRIGHT NOTICE: In addition to the property of others, such as extensive quotations and reproductions of images, this "read-only" computer file contains a great deal of special work product of Austin Meredith, copyright ©2014. Access to these interim materials will eventually be offered for a fee in order to recoup some of the costs of preparation. My hypercontext button invention which, instead of creating a hypertext leap through hyperspace –resulting in navigation problems– allows for an utter alteration of the context within which one is experiencing a specific content already being viewed, is claimed as proprietary to Austin Meredith – and therefore freely available for use by all. Limited permission to copy such files, or any material from such files, must be obtained in advance in writing from the "Stack of the Artist of Kouroo" Project, 833 Berkeley St., Durham NC 27705. Please contact the project at <Kouroo@kouroo.info>.



"It's all now you see. Yesterday won't be over until tomorrow and tomorrow began ten thousand years ago."

- Remark by character "Garin Stevens"
in William Faulkner's INTRUDER IN THE DUST



Prepared: October 3, 2014



THE CORN-LAW RHYMER

EBENEZER ELLIOTT

ARRGH AUTOMATED RESEARCH REPORT

GENERATION HOTLINE



This stuff presumably looks to you as if it were generated by a human. Such is not the case. Instead, someone has requested that we pull it out of the hat of a pirate who has grown out of the shoulder of our pet parrot "Laura" (as above). What these chronological lists are: they are research reports compiled by ARRGH algorithms out of a database of modules which we term the Kouroo Contexture (this is data mining). To respond to such a request for information we merely push a button.



THE CORN-LAW RHYMER

EBENEZER ELLIOTT

Commonly, the first output of the algorithm has obvious deficiencies and we need to go back into the modules stored in the contexture and do a minor amount of tweaking, and then we need to punch that button again and recompile the chronology – but there is nothing here that remotely resembles the ordinary “writerly” process you know and love. As the contents of this originating contexture improve, and as the programming improves, and as funding becomes available (to date no funding whatever has been needed in the creation of this facility, the entire operation being run out of pocket change) we expect a diminished need to do such tweaking and recompiling, and we fully expect to achieve a simulation of a generous and untiring robotic research librarian. Onward and upward in this brave new world.

First come first serve. There is no charge.
Place requests with <Kouroo@kouroo.info>. Arrgh.