

THE SHEFFIELD IRIS 1794-1796.

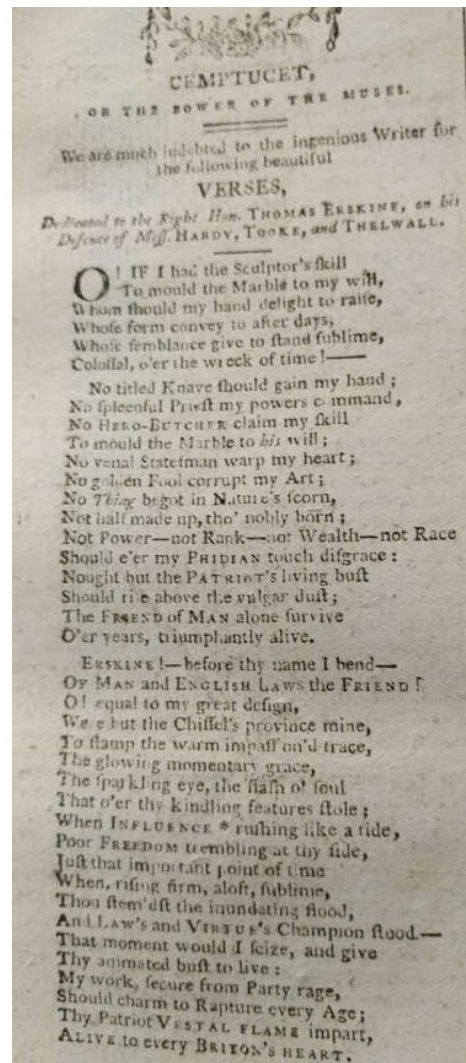
3 'Verses Dedicated to the Right Hon. Thomas Erskine, on The Defence of Mr. Hardy, Tooke and Thelwall, *The Iris*, Issue 24, 12/12/1794

- Dedicated to the right hon. Thomas Erskine, on his defence of Mr Hardy, Tooke and Thelwall.

O! If I had the Sculptor's skill
To mould the marble to my will,
Whom should my hand delight to raise,
Whose form convey to after days,
Whose semblance give to stand sublime,
Colossal, o'er the wreck of time!

No titled knave should gain my hand;
No spleenful priest my powers command,
No hero-butcher claim my skill,
To mould the marble to *his* will;
No venal statesman warp my heart;
No golden fool corrupt my art;
No thing begot in nature's scorn,
Not half made up, tho' nobly born;
Not power- not Rank - not Wealth - not Race
Should e'er my Phidian touch disgrace:
Nought but the patriots living bust
Should rise above the vulgar dust;
The friend of man alone survives
O'er years, triumphantly alive

Erskine! - before thy name I bend—
Of man and English laws the friend
O! Equal to my design,
Were but the chisels province mine,
To stamp the warm impress on'd trace,
The glowing momentary grace,
The sparkling eye, the flash o' foul
That o'er thy kindling features stole;
When influence rushing like a tide,
Poor freedom trembling at thy side,
Just that important joint of time
When, rising firm, aloft, sublime,
Thou stem'dst the inundating flood—



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That moment would I seize, and give
Thy animated bust to live:
My work, secure from party rage,
Should charm to Rapture every Age;
Thy patriot vestal flame impart,
Alive to every Briton's heart

Britannicus