

VERSES ON MRS. BILLINGTON'S APPEARANCE  
AT OXFORD.

TO THOMAS BARRETT LENNARD, ESQ.

**I**N ages past the sweetly-flowing strain,  
By Orpheus pour'd along the verdant plain,  
Disarm'd the tiger's fierce relentless rage,  
And could the lion's horrid wrath assuage:  
Secure from harm amidst the bloody throng,  
The love-lorn bard attun'd his plaintive song.  
Next old Amphion prov'd the pow'r of sound,  
And bade his walls defenceless Thebes surround.  
Such were the wond'rous feats of former days,  
And such the force of long-forgotten lays.  
Though now at Musick's voice no ramparts rise,  
No lion fell in magic thraldom lies,

Yet still its sweet resistless pow'r remains,  
 We feel its force in living vocal strains.  
 For, hark! how worthy of Apollo's praise,  
 Eliza tunes her softly-thrilling lays!  
 And whilst full many a proud aspiring fane  
 In echo sweet prolongs the cheerful strain,  
 Behold, forth issuing from the portals wide,  
 Display'd in many a long and fable tide,  
 The letter'd sons of holy science come,  
 By music hur'd to quit that peaceful home,  
 Where tranquil pleasures crown the passing hour,  
 And Wisdom dwells unaw'd by tyrant power.  
 Behold how round Apollo's shrine they throng,  
 And list enraptur'd to the swelling song.

But mark!—Swift passing through the buoyant air  
 Yon gloried car a nobler tribute bear!  
 See Handel, source of sweet majestic strains,  
 Direct his flight to these his favourite plains.

Behold him now with mute attention pause,  
 Now join, with rapture bright, the just applause.  
 Since Handel then approves the lovely dame,  
 And stamps his fiat on her lasting fame,  
 From lov'd Parnassus' height descend, ye Nine,  
 And round her brows your brightest laurels twine.