

Richard Gough, "To Mrs. S— on presenting the Author with a Lock of her Hair"

**Description**

RICHARD GOUGH

• To Mrs. S— on presenting the Author with a Lock of her Hair •

The Poets, Madam, all aver,  
That once the ruthless god of war,  
Who, bred amid the din of arms,  
Defy'd the power of beauty's charms;  
And long had proudly scorn'd to wear,   Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â 5  
The pleasing fetters of the fair.

    Struck with the graceful air and mein,  
And roseat bloom of Cyprus' queen;  
His savage fierceness all forbore,  
Subdued by Venus, magic lore;   Â 10  
And soon became her power to prove,  
A convert to the force of love.

    The wily Goddess, then, 'tis said,  
All with an heavenly tempered brede;  
Of net-work circled him around,   Â 15  
And to her snowy bosom bound:  
Secur'd the conquest of her eyes,  
And by the rulers of the skies;  
From the fierce God of war so tamed,  
Thence forth was beauties goddess named.   Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â 20

    Thus say the poets, who in fiction,  
In figure and in contradiction,  
To all the laws of modest nature,  
Trick out a strange romantic creature;  
Which, after all, they quaintly feign,   Â 25  
No where exists but in the brain.

    Might I the genuine truth reveal,  
And would you listen to the tale;  
Would you, more kindly still supply,  
Whate'er I pass in silence by?   Â 30  
Whose was the dull, insensate breast,  
Which beauty's power at length confess'd;  
Who soon became that power to prove,  
A convert to the force of love:

    Would you conceive who 'tis I mean,   Â 35  
Then would I thus the rest explain:  
The heavenly net-work, Venus snare,

Was this — *a ringlet of her hair*;  
And she, to give her *all* her due,  
Some faint resemblance was of—you.   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   40

**NOTES:**

**Title** *Mrs. S*— Unable to identify.

**2** *god of war* In Roman mythology, Mars.

**7** *mein* —Physical strength, force or power—(QED).

**8** *roseat* —Resembling or suggestive of a rose, esp.in colour—(QED); *Cyprus*™ *queen* Probably Cleopatra of Egypt, renowned for her beauty, who was given control of the island through her alliance with Marc Antony ( *Encyclopedia Britannica*).

**10** *Venus* In Roman mythology, the goddess of love.

**14** *brede* —Anything plaited, entwined, or interwoven—(QED).

**25** *queintly* An older spelling of *quaintly* (OED).

**31** *insensate* —Destitute of physical sense or feeling—(QED).

**Source:** *The Gentleman*™s *Magazine* (April 1770), p. 183.

*Edited by Matthew Bragg*