

Description

• Ode to Venus

But Christie lifts his *hammer* high; 25
Oh! swiftly, swiftly, Goddess, fly,
And vindicate your claim!
So Gretna's priest shall chaunt your praise,
And frequent pairs enraptur'd raise
A column to your fame. 30

NOTES:

Title *Venus* Roman goddess of beauty and love (*OED*).

Subtitle *Gretna Green* A Scottish village that became a popular destination for English couples looking to elope after Lord Hardwicke's Marriage Act (1753) was brought into force in England. *The Newcastle Courant*, for example, carried an advertisement for the "Sale of Gretna" by auction (No. 6354, 21 July 1798).

1 *Horace* Roman lyric poet (65-8 BCE), whose ode addressed to Venus (*Odes*, IV.1) is being paraphrased in this stanza.

2 *Cyprian* Of Cyprus, "an island in the eastern Mediterranean, famous in ancient times for the worship of Aphrodite or Venus" (*OED*).

4 *paltry* "Very small or meagre" (*OED*).

5 *trite* "Worn out by constant use or repetition" (*OED*).

7 *juster* "Well-founded; justifiable" (*OED*); *menac'd* "Threatened" (*OED*).

8 *Unvarnish'd* "Not covered" (*OED*).

11 *Cupid* Roman god of love, son of Mercury and Venus (*OED*).

14 *Plutus* Greek God of abundance or wealth (*Britannica*).

16 *Hymen* God of marriage in Greek and Roman mythology (*OED*).

19 *dotard* "An old person" (*OED*); *sooty face* "At Gretna Green the marriage ceremony was usually performed by the blacksmith" (*Britannica*).

23 *Fetters* Figuratively, a restraint (*OED*).

25 *Christie* James Christie (1730-1803), a Scottish auctioneer who founded the auction house Christie's in London, England.

28 *chaunt* "A repeated rhythmic phrase" (*OED*).

SOURCE: *The Gentleman's Magazine* (August 1798), p. 707. [J. Paul Leonard Library]

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