

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