
**The Works Of John
Marston Vol I**

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THE WORKS
OF
JOHN MARSTON.

REPRINTED FROM THE ORIGINAL EDITIONS.

WITH NOTES, AND SOME ACCOUNT OF HIS
LIFE AND WRITINGS.

BY
J. O. HALLIWELL, F.R.S., F.S.A

IN THREE VOLUMES.
VOL. I.



LONDON:
JOHN RUSSELL SMITH,
SOHO SQUARE.

1856.



P R E F A C E.

S O few particulars have been recovered respecting the life and personal character of JOHN MARSTON, whose dramatic and satirical writings are now for the first time collected together, it would be futile to attempt to promote them to the dignity of Biography. The circumstances known, or rather conjectured, respecting this author, for nearly all of which we are indebted to Antony à Wood, may be stated in a very few words. According to the Oxford biographer, John Marston, the dramatist, was a student in Corpus Christi College, Oxford, and was admitted Bachelor of Arts on the twenty-third of February, 1592; but, adds Wood, "in what county he was born I cannot yet find, because, 1st, that he was not matriculated; 2nd, that he was not scholar of that house, or Fellow, in the admissions of both which, their counties of nativity are constantly registered." Even this statement, however, appears to be formed upon a mere conjecture originating in the identity of name, not upon the authority of trustworthy information; for he previously mentions a John Marston, "son of a father of both his names, of the

City of Coventry esquire," who "became either a commoner or a gentleman-commoner of Brasen-nose College in 1591, and in the beginning of February, 1593, he was admitted Bachelor of Arts, as the eldest son of an esquire" (Jonson, in the *Poetaster*, expressly alludes to the respectability of Marston's birth); "and soon after completing that degree by determination, he went his way, and improved his learning in other faculties." This John Marston died in June, 1634, and was buried near his father, some time a Counsellor of the Middle Temple, in the Temple Church in London, "under the stone which hath written on it, *Oblivioni Sacrum.*" Dugdale mentions a John Marston, who was appointed Lecturer of the Middle Temple in 1592, and who was probably the "father" referred to by Wood.

It is remarked by Wood, that the person last named cannot be the dramatist, because the latter died before the publication of the collective edition of his plays in 1633; an observation which clearly shows that he was speaking somewhat at random, for that Marston was living in that year is proved by the dedication prefixed to the work by William Sheares, in which he is spoken of as being "now in his autumn and declining age," and as being "*far distant from this place,*" meaning, the place of publication. This objection removed, there can be but little doubt that the John Marston who was buried in the Temple Church in 1634 was really the eminent dramatist. According to Oldys, Marston sprung probably from a family of that name settled in Aftcot (?), in Shropshire; and he married

Mary, daughter of the Rev. William Wilkes, Chaplain to James I., and Rector of St. Martin's, co. Wilts. Now Wood, in a notice of Wilkes, says that the latter "died at Barford St. Martin, in Wiltshire, of which he was rector, leaving a daughter named Mary, who was married to John Marston of the city of Coventry, gentleman; which John, dying 25 June, 1634, was buried in the church belonging to the Temple in London, near to the body of John Marston his father, sometimes a Counsellor of the Middle Temple." The John Marston in the first notice, and the son-in-law of the King's Chaplain, are thus shown to be the same person. He is also the dramatic writer, unless another link in the chain of evidence be unnecessarily regarded as a curious but possible coincidence. In Ben Jonson's *Conversations with William Drummond*, it is stated—"Marston wrott his father-in-lawes preachings, and his father-in-law his commedies;" which seems, observes Gifford, a humorous allusion to the sombre air of Marston's comedies, as contrasted with the cheerful tone of his father-in-law's discourses.

A few days before his death, afflicted with an illness so serious that he was compelled to make a mark instead of signing his name, Marston gave instructions for his Will, which was duly proved by his widow in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury on July 9th, 1634. In this document he is styled *clarke*, probably in reference to his collegiate degree. He mentions a cousin in Shropshire, which is the county, according to Oldys, whence his family originated; and other friends and relatives are named, whose

connection with him is otherwise unnoticed. A copy of the whole is here given :—

“In the name of God, Amen. I John Marston of London clarke, being sicke in bodie, but of perfect and sound mind and memorie, doe make my last Will and Testament in manner and forme followeing. Imprimis, I give and bequeath my soule into the handes of Almighty God, my Maker and Redeemer, and my bodie to be buried in Christian buryall in some convenient place where my executor hereafter named shall appointe. Item, I give and bequeath to James Coghill and James Boynton, both of Christchurch in the County of Southampton, the somme of fortie shillings apeece to be paide within sixe monthes after my decease. Item, I give and bequeath to Marie Fabian, the wiefe of William Fabian of Christchurch aforesaide, towards the educacion of hir five sonnes, the somme of twentie eighte pound of currant money of England to bee paied to hir within sixe monthes after my decease. Item, I give to the parrish church of Christchurch aforesaide the somme of five poundes, to be paide within sixe monthes next after my decease. Item, I give and bequeath to my couzin Hunt of Ashford, in the countye of Saloppe, the somme of twentie poundes to be paied within sixe moneths after my decease. Item, I give and bequeath to my eozen Griffins, daughter of . . . Kingston in the Countie of Surrey, the somme of five poundes to be paied unto hir within sixe monthes after my decease. Item, I give to Marie Collice, the daughter of my cozen, Anne Collis of Chancerie Lane,