

Classic Poetry Series

John Marston

- poems -

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The Scourge of Villainy

In serious jest, and jesting seriousness,
I strive to scourge polluting beastliness;
I invoke no Delian deity,
No sacred offspring of Mnemosyne;
I pray in aid of no Castalian Muse,
No nymph, no female angel, to infuse
A sprightly wit to raise my flagging wings,
And teach me tune these harsh discordant strings.
I crave no sirens of our halcyon times,
To grace the accents of my rough-hew'd rhymes;
But grim Reproof, stern Hate of Villainy,
Inspire and guide a Satire's poesy.
Fair Detestation of foul odious sin,
In which our swinish times lie wallowing,
Be thou my conduct and my Genius,
My wits-inciting sweet-breath'd Zephyrus.
O that a Satire's hand had force to pluck
Some floodgate up, to purge the world from muck!
Would God I could turn Alpheus river in,
To purge this Augean oxstall from foul sin!
Well, I will try; awake, Impurity,
And view the veil drawn from thy villainy!

John Marston