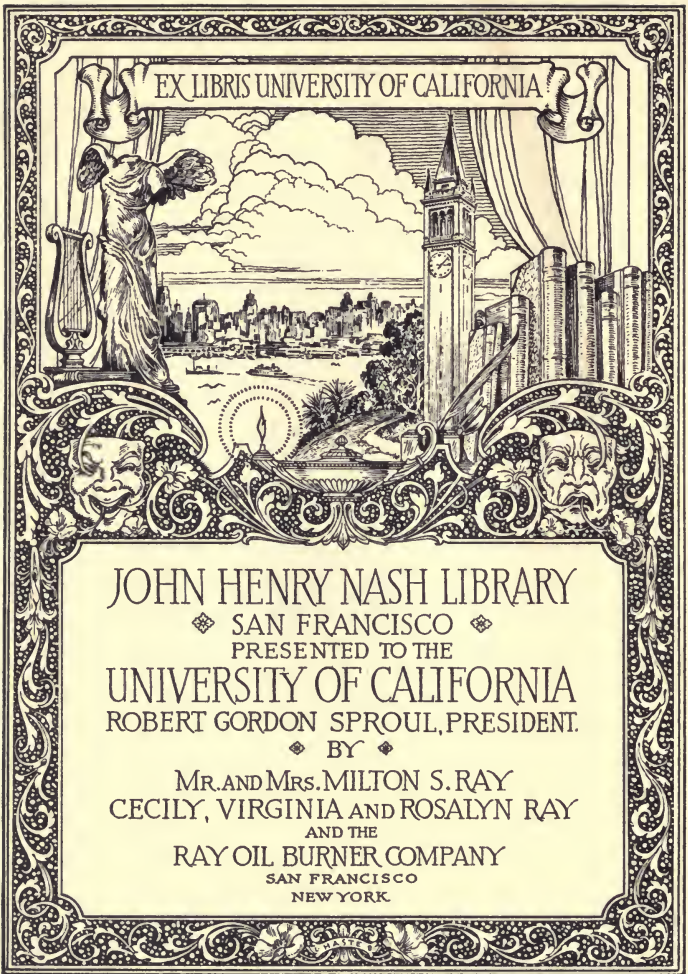


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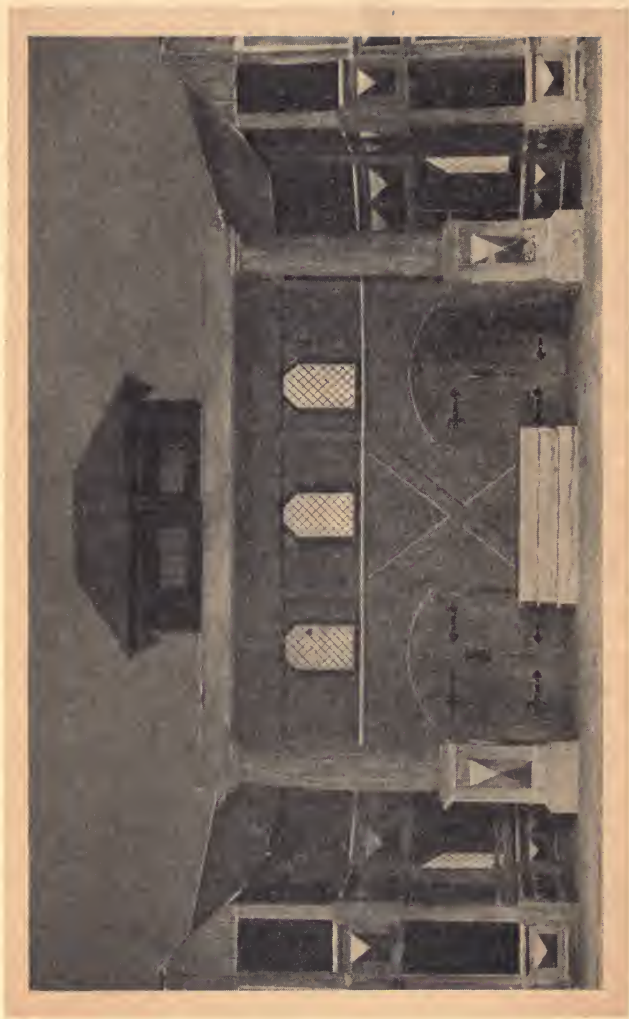


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THE STAGE.

ELIZABETHAN HUMOURS  
AND THE  
COMEDY OF BEN JONSON

being the Book of the Play of  
*“Every Man in his Humour”*

1598

as produced by

*The English Club of Stanford University*

1905

*“O Rare Ben Jonson”*



PAUL ELDER AND COMPANY  
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Never again did [Jonson's] genius, his industry, his conscience and his taste unite in the triumphant presentation of a work so faultless, so satisfactory, so absolute in achievement, and so free from blemish or defect.

Molière himself has no character more exquisitely and spontaneously successful than the immortal and inimitable Bobadil: and even Bobadil is not unworthily surrounded and supported by the other graver or lighter characters of this magnificent and perfect comedy.

SWINBURNE.



## Introduction.

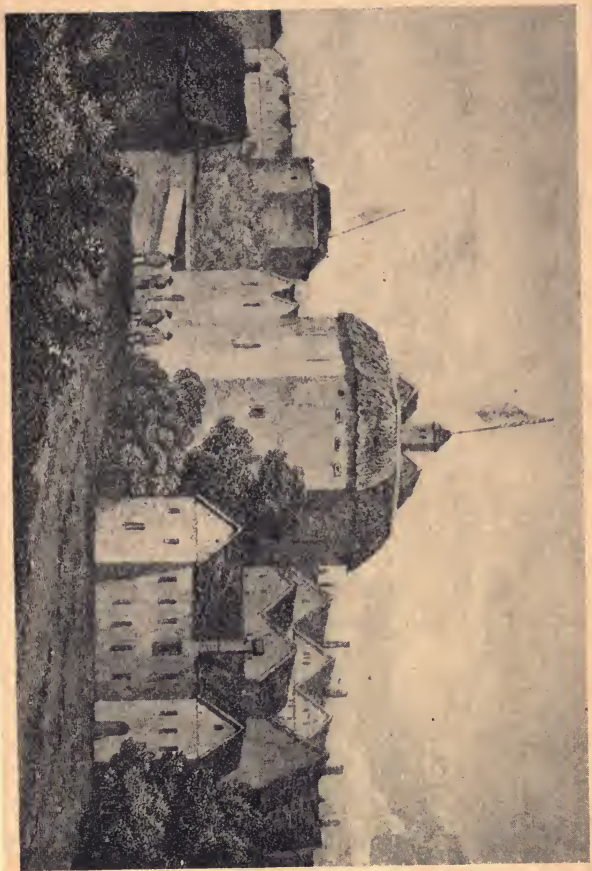
THE Stanford English Club issues this little book in connection with, and in commemoration of, the presentation of Jonson's *Every Man in his Humour* at Stanford University in March, 1905.

This is one of a series of presentations of old English plays in the Elizabethan manner, the first of which was the revival of Beaumont and Fletcher's *Knight of the Burning Pestle*, in March, 1903. The enthusiastic reception accorded this effort encouraged the English Club to preserve the Elizabethan stage built for the play, so that it might be permanently available for such presentations, and to invite Mr. Ben Greet and his company of English players to come to Stanford in the fall semesters of both 1903 and 1904. The Greet company produced, besides the old Morality play of *Everyman*, two Shakspearean comedies, *Twelfth Night* and *Much Ado About Nothing*, and, last of all, *Hamlet*,—the second time in America that Shakspeare's greatest work has been produced in full and in the Elizabethan manner.

All these dramatic performances, including the present one of *Every Man in his Humour*, have been based on the belief that not only is there an antiquarian and scholarly interest in plays performed as they were in Shakspeare's time (without elaborate scenery or other accessories of the modern theatre), but that there is an artistic value in this simple manner of presentation which more than compensates for the loss in superficial brilliancy. Many a lover of the drama said, in effect, after seeing the play of *The Knight of the*

*Burning Pestle*: "Hitherto I have always felt some pity for the Elizabethans as having to see Shakspeare's plays presented with the crudeness of the early theatre, the changes of scenery being left largely to the imagination; but I now feel that they were more fortunate than modern play-goers." That is to say, the imagination may be trusted. As Dr. Johnson put it, in his defense of Shakspeare's plays: "It is false that any fiction is mistaken for reality. . . . He that can take the stage at one time for the palace of the Ptolemies, may take it in half an hour for the promontory of Actium." One may go further, and observe that the constant changes of locality in the Elizabethan drama were devices fitted to the stage conditions of the time, and seem much less strange and venturesome when scene-unity is maintained than when the stage-manager tries to keep up with them with the aid of all modern mechanical ingenuity.

The stage built for the English Club plays is modeled in part on that of the Swan Theatre as represented in the drawing handed down from 1596, which was reproduced in the book of *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*. The description which accompanied the sketch in that book may well be in part repeated here. The stage structure is shown up to the very eaves of the roof, which must be conceived of as sloping away into the open sky. The stage itself should be thought of as extending into the pit of the theatre, so that the "groundlings" (who paid only for standing room) can look over the sides of it as well as the front. The rear portion is covered by a roof supported at the front by two carved pillars, and between these pillars a curtain (called a "traverse")



THE GLOBE THEATRE.  
FROM AN OLD DRAWING IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM.





can be drawn when occasion requires, thus dividing the main stage into two parts—the inner and outer. A third stage is formed by the balcony at the rear, which is also used as a sort of players' gallery when not required for action. Normally the background represents the exterior of a house, with two entrance doors; but in the action one of these doors may represent a scene widely separated from that indicated by the other. There are also supplementary entrances and exits through the arras hangings at either side. Behind the stage are the "tiring-house" and property-room. At the edge of the stage, on either side, we have a glimpse of the boxes used by the musicians and those rented by aristocrats, called the "lords' rooms." Not content with these fairly conspicuous seats, the young gallants of the period occupy portions of the stage itself; for an extra sixpence they are admitted through the tiring-house, and the theatre-boys will then rent them stools for sitting in full view of the audience. Finally, over the tiring-house is the elevated lodge or tower, visible also from outside the theatre, where the flag flies to indicate that a play is on the boards, and in the window of which appears the trumpeter who announces the time for its beginning. If the spectator will shut out from his mind's eye the more modern surroundings of the stage, imagining instead of them the gallery boxes continued around the whole circle of the hall, and the pit filled with a good-natured, jostling crowd of London citizens, he will be prepared in spirit to see the old play as given in 1598.

The play of *Every Man in his Humour* was chosen for reproduction partly because it is the work of the only Eliza-

bethan dramatist of the first rank who has not yet been represented on the Stanford stage, partly because of the interest of the play as picturing the life of its period, and partly for its historic interest in the progress of the drama. It was the earliest of Jonson's comedies, and represents his deliberate choice of the realistic in preference to the romantic drama. As Professor Herford observes in this connection: "No other play in the whole development of the Elizabethan drama marks so distinctly an epoch as the great comedy with which Jonson opened his career. . . . None of his fellows made their *début* with so much of the air of deliberate innovation. . . . Shakspeare, though a great, a far greater, artist, is not primarily a theorist in art; he does not readily, or often, or very energetically, take sides upon questions of art. His probable first piece, *Love's Labour's Lost*, is a criticism of contemporary life, but . . . it is not a criticism of the contemporary drama. The *Every Man in his Humour* is both. . . . No English dramatist had yet attempted comedy on the basis of so severe an interpretation of its scope, as a picture of follies and foibles. . . . No more genuine sketches of London character are to be found in the drama. They are drawn, not from books but from observation, and as an observer Jonson had no equal among his contemporaries save Shakspeare."

This comedy was first produced in 1598, by the Lord Chamberlain's Servants (Shakspeare's company), and was published in 1601. Some eight years later Jonson revised and altered the play, and it is the altered form (as published in the Folio of 1616) that has always been used for modern presenta-

tions. Few plays have more interesting associations in connection with the actors who have produced them or the occasions on which they have been revived. In the first presentation the cast included not only "Will. Shakspeare" himself, but Richard Burbage, the leading actor of the time, and Heming and Condell, editors of the Shakspeare Folio. In 1675 *Every Man in his Humour* was revived for Restoration audiences by the Duke of York's company, the Earl of Dorset writing an Epilogue, which is reprinted elsewhere in this volume. In the eighteenth century Garrick produced the play at Drury Lane, winning new laurels in the part of Kiteley. In the earlier nineteenth century Edmund Kean and other notable actors were concerned in still other revivals. And in 1845 it was the first of the plays produced by Charles Dickens and his friends; Forster's account of the performance is quoted on a succeeding page. In brilliancy of rendering the present reproduction cannot hope to rival the work of these great artists of the past, but it is perhaps not too self-indulgent to say that the play has never been reproduced with more serious historic interest or sincerer artistic purpose.

## Elizabethan Humours.

THE TITLE does not mean Elizabethan humour, Elizabethan jokes, or Elizabethan comedies, but something quite distinct from all of these. Let us go to Ben Jonson himself for a definition. In his second comedy, *Every Man Out of his Humour*, he refers to the old theory that the fluids or "humours" of the body were four in number, and that in the normal man these were present in just the right proportions.

"In every human body  
The choler, melancholy, phlegm, and blood  
By reason that they flow continually  
In some one part, and are not continent,  
Receive the name of *humours*."

He then goes on to tell how from this circumstance the word gets a different meaning, and

"when some one peculiar quality  
Doth so possess a man, that it doth draw  
All his affects, his spirits, and his powers,  
In their confluents all to run one way,  
This may be truly said to be a *Humour*."

A character was humorous, then, when distinguished by some exaggerated trait of this sort; and a picture or play which presented such a character naturally came to be called humorous, too. Such characters were amusing through their abnormality, and aroused laughter, though of a somewhat different sort from that awakened by wit. So it came to pass, by one of those curious series of natural changes which appear every-



BOBADIL.





where in the history of words, that a word meaning originally something fluid came to mean something amusing. The "humour" of Ben Jonson's titles stands half way between the early meaning and the late.

The *humours* of the Elizabethan age, then, were the characteristic foibles or follies of the men of the time, which made them at once caricatures of themselves and fit subjects for caricature by satirist or dramatist. It was an age of humours, because a time of such spontaneity and versatility, when Englishmen felt the fullness of human life, wished to taste all of it for themselves, and did not seek to make themselves monotonously like other men. The lusty exuberance of the closing days of the sixteenth century,—their independence, intensity, and indefatigable curiosity, are vital sources of the splendid mass of literature which they produced. But there was another side: tending to exaggerate themselves, these same qualities were the sources also of both folly and vice.

Jonson believed firmly that it was the business of comedy to caricature and make ridiculous the foolish aspects of these humours, and it is interesting to find one of his contemporaries, Nicholas Breton, referring to his work in this direction as closely allied with that of the satirist:

“ 'Tis strange to see the humors of these daies :  
How first the Satyre bites at imperfections :  
The Epigrammist in his quips displaies  
A wicked course in shadowes of corrections :  
The Humorist hee strictly makes collections  
Of loth'd behaviours both in youthe and age :  
And makes them plaie their parts upon a stage.”

The young gentleman of the age was the leading figure in its gaiety, and therefore in the satiric representation of its folly. In *Every Man in his Humour* Jonson includes five types of this sort, similar but quite distinct. In general the ambition of the Elizabethan gentleman was to make as brilliant a show of himself as possible,—an ambition which in modern society has come to be more generally attributed to the other sex. He was eager for the latest fashions in ruffs, doublets, hose, garters, boots, and hair-dressing, especially if they were continental rather than English. Marston describes such a young gentleman who,

“after two years’ fast and earnest prayer  
The fashion change not, lest he should despair  
Of ever hoarding up more fair gay clothes,”

shows himself in all his glory in the London streets. His ruff “hath more doubles far than Ajax’s shield”; his hat a “small crown and huge great brim,” with feathers filling all the band; his clothes are “crossed and recrossed with lace”;

“His clothes perfumed, his fusty mouth is aired,  
His chin new swept, his very cheeks are glaired,”—

that is, made shiny with the white of an egg. Joseph Hall pictures the same type at just the same time, as wearing curled periwigs, always “poring on their pocket-glass”;

“Tyr’d with pinn’d ruffs, and fans, and partlet strips,  
And busks and verdingales about their hips;  
And tread on corked stilts a prisoner’s pace,  
And make their napkin for their spitting place,  
And gripe their waist within a narrow span.”



The young gallant is also represented as eager for literature.. He watches the book-stalls about St. Paul's church-yard for the latest books of sonnets, is sometimes represented as reading Italian or Spanish works upside-down, and zealously practices the art of writing verses for himself. He is no less a warrior, too, and is prepared to hold the wall, as he walks through town, against any clumsy countryman who proposes to walk where he will. He studies eagerly the latest turns and terms in the art of fencing, as they sift in from Spain, and puts them to practice on those less skilled than he. He is devoted to tobacco ("drinking," not smoking, it, in Elizabethan parlance), not because he is a slave to nicotine so much as because the pleasures of this weed are new, strange, and fashionable. In like manner he seeks after and acquires all new and strange oaths. He believes that life is given to enjoy, and though perhaps without the wherewithal to buy a dinner, he will in some way manage to include good-fellowship, the theatre, and the tavern in his day. Such a day, in the life of one of the more lazy and prosperous sort, is thus described by John Davies of Hereford:

“First, he doth rise at ten; and at eleven  
He goes to ‘Gyls,’ where he doth eat till one;  
Then sees a play till six, and sups at seven;  
And after supper straight to bed is gone;  
And there till ten next day he doth remain,  
And then he dines and sees a comedy,  
And then he sups and goes to bed again.”

But if not so lazy and more given to society, he has perhaps found the entrée to some merchant's house in the city, and

solaces dull days by a flirtation with the citizen's wife or daughter—not always with undisturbed outcome. He has many good points, this gay young subject of the Virgin Queen, but simplicity and downrightness are not among them, as he would freely confess. Said Sir John Harington, speaking for the gentlemen of his time:

“Wee goe brave in apparell that wee may be taken for better men than wee bee; wee use much bumbastings and quiltings to seeme better formed, better showldered, smaller wasted, and fuller thyght, than wee are; wee barbe and shave ofte, to seeme younnger than wee are; we use perfumes both inward and outward, to seeme sweeter than wee be; corkt shooes to seeme taller than wee be; we use cowrtuows salutations to seem kinder than wee bee; lowly obay-sances to seeme humbler than we bee; and somtyme grave and godly communication, to seem wyser or devowter than wee be.”\*

We must think of Jonson's *Every Man in his Humour*, then, as a sort of group of Gibson pictures of this contemporary society; only the dramatist does not at all confine himself to any one circle or stratum, but gives us a cross-section of life of many kinds, as shown in a single day's doings. Every character in the play is not only an individual, but a type,—a humour personified. In many cases his name gives us a clue to his trait, and suggests at once that we are moving in the field of caricature, though among caricatures so lifelike that the descriptive realism of the picture is quite unimpaired. The dramatist says to us, in effect: “Here is a company of my fellow-Englishmen, and to-day every man is to show his humour to his heart's content.” What they do

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\* For some further account of the humours of these gallants, see the two satires reprinted at the end of this book, one of which was originally published in the year of *Every Man in his Humour*, and the other a year earlier.

proves to be by no means uninteresting; but, while the plot of the comedy is perfect in its way, it is never allowed to draw our attention from the individual characters for whom it exists.

Five young gentlemen, as has already been suggested, form the central group. Two of these are without salient qualities of a ridiculous sort, and are not treated in the method of caricature. Ned Knowell is a university man, lately out of college, and has the qualities of the typical college man of any age: a lover of good poetry, good women, and good fun. His friend Wellbred is distinguished from him only subtly; he is an urbane young gentleman, with a vein of the malicious concealed by his good manners, and fond of a practical joke—especially when aimed against his elderly brother-in-law. The three others of the group of friends are of the caricatured types. Matthew, called the “town gull,” is the would-be lover of literature, with a zeal not according to knowledge, who unerringly selects the worst in contemporary poetry for admiration, and then—not being able to compose for himself—rehashes it as his own. Stephen, called the “country gull,” is the young gentleman whose opportunities for keeping up with the fashions have been limited, and who is therefore, while in London, greatly concerned to learn the latest oaths and to share all the dissipations of his more favored friends. And Captain Bobadil, who is called a “Paul’s man” (that is, one who frequents the lounging-aisle of St. Paul’s in quest of those from whom he can extort a dinner), is the master of the sword and of the laws of the duello,—so long as he is not required to put them into practice; together with

Shakspeare's Falstaff and Beaumont's Bessus, he helps to make the great trio of the coward captains of the English stage.

Opposed to this group of five young men is one of five older men, who are to some degree suspicious or critical of the younger. Here again we have some who are presented quite naturally, without the method of caricature, and whose humours are such as may be found in humanity at any time, rather than distinctively Elizabethan. Knowell Senior appears as the elderly gentleman who claims the wisdom of age, but is not wise enough to understand or keep up with the humours of youth; this is the dramatic irony which gives rise to the whole plot. Master Kately is the elderly husband of a youthful wife, hitherto a staid man of business, but now quite unable to restrain his jealous suspicions, and so driven about by every wind that blows. Downright, his brother-in-law, is a typical country squire, robust and dogmatic, with all the impatience of his class for city manners and follies. Cob, the water-carrier (who traces his lineage to the first red herring that ever was broiled,—“cob” being the familiar Elizabethan term for herring), is an oddity of low life, querulous of the times, and especially a despiser of tobacco; he appears to be introduced to give us a view of the humours of a social class that otherwise we might not meet. And Justice Clement, whose genial figure dominates the closing scenes of the play, is the whimsical Minos whose humour it is to judge not by the law and the testimony, but by his own sweet will.

These are the ten characters every man of whom is presented in his humour, and who together form a cross-section of London life in 1600. There are others in the



COB.





play, contributing their share to its purposes, such as Cash and Formal, the typical clerks, and the three women, Cob's wife, Dame Kitely and her sister, who — it must be admitted — make but trifling contributions to the picture. One cannot but reflect regretfully on the pretty story which a dramatist of the romantic school — Shakspeare, Beaumont, or Fletcher — would have woven about the person of Mistress Bridget, whom Jonson so sternly leaves in the background, though he sketches her in skilful outline and gives her a part in the action. On the other hand, there is yet another character, in the portrayal of which the full genius of the dramatist is engaged. This is Brainworm, the servant, who stands apart from the groups already described, but wields most of them as he will, and slyly conducts the great part of the action of the play. Brainworm is perhaps less an Elizabethan than a clever cousin of the slaves of Latin comedy; yet he is very much at home in London. It is his humour to take any shape he chooses, needful for the accomplishment of his purposes, and in this way he dominates the situation like a Prospero who is also his own Ariel. His name, whatever its precise meaning, certainly suggests the cleverly sinuous manner in which he works.

In a comedy of this character, which sets out to portray satirically the fashions and foibles of a certain age, dealing only (in Jonson's own words) with

“deeds and language such as men do use,  
And persons such as comedy would choose,  
When she would shew an image of the times,”

it would be idle to expect the same sort of charm which the

romantic dramatists give us, surrounding their characters—who hail indifferently from Spain, Italy, or the Forest of Arden—with the passions and beauties which are of no age or place, but “for all time.” We must not look for this. In *Every Man in his Humour* our interest is to be primarily in acquainting ourselves with some of our ancestors in the spacious days of Queen Elizabeth. We shall not find them at their best or wisest, but frankly on their “humorous” side. Yet there are elements in this comedy, too, which give it other attractions than those of merely satiric realism. The humours of mankind are not altogether different in the twentieth and the sixteenth centuries, and we have found therefore certain studies of human nature in aspects which are never obsolete. Nor does the satiric method of treatment leave one with a bad taste in the mouth. Jonson has had the reputation of being rather trenchant than kindly in dealing with human faults; yet it cannot be for nothing that he entrusts the disentangling of the threads of his story, and the awarding of judgment, to Justice *Clement*. When the court speaks, it is on the whole to this effect: The humours charged in the complaint are absurd enough, no doubt, and when they are the expression of plagiarism or poltroonery they must be punished—yet even then with nothing worse than the loss of a supper; but on the whole the men behind them seem to be excellent fellows, and the judgment of the court is that they forgive one another and “put off all discontent.”

Let us therefore acknowledge this good-nature in the words of Ned Knowell: “We are the more bound to your humanity, sir.”

RAYMOND M. ALDEN.



## Jonson's Learned Sock.

**S**UBJECT as we all are to the "sovereign sway and masterdom" of Shakspeare, we are prone to do something less than justice to the master of a wholly different school,—in some sense a rival school of literary art and dramatic craftsmanship. Since Lessing and Goethe all stars of first magnitude in poetry, in romance, in criticism, look to Shakspeare as the focus of their system. Such an enthusiasm for Ben Jonson as that shown by Gifford a century ago, reactionary then, seems now impossible. In contrast with the energizing radiance of our great luminary, the world of Ben Jonson appears lunar, shadowy, and cold. Yet a world it is,—the centre too of another system than ours; and failing to take account of its presence and influence, we miscalculate the forces at play in the brightest heaven of invention.

Naturally, perhaps inevitably, we examine Ben Jonson in the contrasting light of Shakspeare. In life they were fellow-townsmen, fellow-craftsmen, and, indeed, fellows in a close personal sense. Even had Jonson's temper been one of less acerbity, it would have been but natural in him, the equipped and accredited schoolman, to look at first upon his elder rival as something of an adventurer. The modest Shakspeare, like others, doubtless looked up to Jonson as to a man of superior training; and Jonson probably accepted the homage with an easy sense of superiority. This view is borne out by the tone of the remarks upon Shakspeare in Jonson's *Timber*: "He was, indeed, honest, and of an open

and free nature; had an excellent fancy, brave notions, and gentle expressions, wherein he flowed with that facility that sometimes it was necessary he should be stopped."

To accuse Jonson of superciliousness in this airy handling of the first poet of the race is little to the purpose. It is the business of the critic to perceive and point out the fact that the author of—let us say—*Romeo and Juliet*, in the early form represented by the first Quarto, needed nothing so much as just that tuition which Ben Jonson of all men was best qualified to give. That a spirit at once so shrewd and so sensitive as Shakspeare's could come into intimate contact with such an intellect as Jonson's without being profoundly influenced, seems unlikely. One fancies Shakspeare sitting down, after a pulpiting from Ben at the Mermaid upon the text of that Holy Trinity of his, the Unities, to indite the chorus in *Henry V.* which "wafts you o'er the seas." Is it not "something more than fantasy" to believe that Ben's tuition counts for something in the reserve and concentration which mark such masterpieces as *Othello* and *The Tempest*? For such service as that here supposed Ben Jonson would have deserved well of the Republic of Letters, even had he not been himself a great creative spirit. That he came sooner or later to realize the supremacy of Shakspeare, appears in the lines "To the memory of my beloved, the Author Mr. William Shakspeare: and what he hath left us,"—lines evincing a prescience seldom paralleled in literary criticism.

*"Triumph, my Britaine, thou hast one to showe,  
To whom all Scenes of Europe homage owe.  
He was not of an age, but for all time!"*



BEN JONSON.



When these lines were penned, their illustrious subject had been for seven years in his grave; and doubtless Jonson had come to regard him with a more idealizing vision,—that is, in this case at all events, a truer vision. But it was impossible for Jonson to have forgotten that this was the same “Will. Shakespeare” who had played the part of Knowell a quarter of a century before: then chiefly known for his honey-flowing rimes and for the facile eloquence that flowed so free in the speeches of Richard and Berowne. Looking “upon this picture and on this,” it is surely legitimate to suppose that Jonson took some credit to himself for the difference. Such an interpretation gives swelling significance to the lines in the Folio.

The reader of Shakspeare who takes up Ben Jonson is immediately struck by a series of contrasts, one of the chief of which is implied in the foregoing remarks. When he played a leading part in Jonson’s first comedy, Shakspeare was a relatively undeveloped young man of thirty-four. In his dramas there was seen as yet but

“ The baby figure of the giant mass  
Of things to come at large.”

What weary courses he had to traverse, what bitter cups to drain, ere he could become the creator of such mighty works as *Hamlet* and *Lear*, or could arrive at such serenity of spirit as breathes through *The Tempest* and *The Winter’s Tale*! At the time in question, Jonson was the matured veteran of twenty-five: in years a decade the younger man, but as an artist far the elder. He was old and wise with the age and



wisdom of the ancients. Saturated with the theory of Aristotle, eager to revive the art of Terence, he may be said, in respect to maturity and equipment, to have started in life a quarter of a century in advance of Shakspeare, who had to learn his art for the most part under the slow tuition of Experience. Jonson, on the other hand, seems to have had little to learn in that school. Between *Every Man in his Humour* and *The Staple of News* there is a lapse of twenty-seven years; yet the difference in art and style is less marked than that which may be traced between almost any two comedies of Shakspeare that might be named.

Perhaps the reason for this will become apparent if we push the contrast a little further. It has become a truism to say that Shakspeare's art is organic: "the art itself is nature." He lives and loves, grieves and grows, and, as he puts his life into his plays, they come to have the infinite variety of Nature herself. Jonson studies and observes, painfully embodying the results in sharp outlines. He has the distinctness, the special aim, the concentration of a Hogarth. His purpose is satirical and didactic. Witty and amusing as his comedies undeniably are, they lack atmosphere and sunshine. He is caustic, contemptuous, rough, and his wish to be honest makes him too often disgustingly coarse. Too long commerce with him leaves one depressed with a sense of the aridity of the life with which he deals. *Volpone*, for example, considered as a *tour de force* in the handling of a simple *motif* out of which is developed a highly organized, complex plot, is marvellous; and to one who can for the time being divest himself of all human feeling, must be highly diverting. Much

the same thing is true of *Epicæne*, the fun of which lies in the persecution of an elderly gentleman, who has presumably earned the title to a quiet life, by his graceless nephew and heir. The superb plot of the *Alchemist* is spoiled for us by no such associations of cruelty, although the satirical portraits of the Puritan Pilgrims are anything but genial. *Every Man in his Humour* and the merry *Bartbolomew Fair* have an atmosphere of cheerfulness that is scarcely elsewhere found in the comedies of Jonson. One feels that all these plays are for the stage rather than for the study.

Why then have they not kept the stage, to which they are so well suited by their firm draughtsmanship and by their ingenuity of plot? Partly, no doubt, because they deal with bygone social conditions, and scourge strangely unrecognizable types of folly. Jonson's eye, keen as it was, failed to pierce to the universal, as could the eye of Shakspeare, in whose *dramatis personæ* we hail our own humanity. We take sides for and against Shylock, just as we do in the case of Cromwell or of Mary Stuart. There is, of course, no room for two opinions about any of Ben Jonson's personages: but what if there were?

Another reason, perhaps a deeper, for Jonson's obsolescence, is to be found in the world's advance in what we call the sentiment of humanity. This writer's lack of human sympathy limits him even as a moralist, so that, when we compare him with Shakspeare, his ethical judgments seem ungenerous or mechanical.

This negative view of Jonson, as he appears in contrast with Shakspeare, should nowise blind us to the solid qualities

which gave him such an ascendancy over some of the best spirits of his own age and of the age next following. Kately, Abel Drugger, Sir Epicure Mammon, Corbaccio, Tribulation Wholesome, Zeal-of-the-Land Busy live in our memories as distinct types. In keen observation and unrelenting realism Jonson is unsurpassed. His immortal Captain Bobadil may take the wall of Parolles, or of any ruffler of the Elizabethan stage, save Falstaff alone. As a master of the economy of plot, Jonson is preëminent: in the matter of plot, perhaps no dramatist is more self-dependent. Here Shakspeare may be well content to take second place. Moreover, Jonson is of course a poet of distinction and refinement, whose sweet songs have a singularly haunting quality. Clearly, he was in his day a heroic figure in the eyes of the younger spirits of choice. It is still stimulating to come into contact with an intellect so strong, honest, uncompromising. If we cannot love him, we cannot but respect him; and the better he is known, the more appropriate to him alone appears the pregnant epitaph "O rare Ben Jonson!"

MELVILLE B. ANDERSON.



Upon Ben Jonson,

*the Most Excellent of Comic Poets.*

1638.

**M**IRROR of Poets! mirror of our age!  
Which, her whole face beholding on thy stage,  
Pleas'd and displeas'd with her own faults, endures  
A remedy, like those whom music cures.

Thou not alone those various inclinations,  
Which nature gives to ages, sexes, nations,  
Hast traced with thy all-resembling pen,  
But all that custom hath impos'd on men,  
Or ill-got habits, which distort them so  
That scarce the brother can the brother know,  
Is represented to the wondering eyes  
Of all that see or read thy Comedies.  
Whoever in those glasses looks, may find  
The spots return'd, or graces, of his mind;  
And, by the help of so divine an art,  
At leisure view and dress his nobler part.  
Narcissus, cozen'd by that flattering well  
Which nothing could but of his beauty tell,  
Had here, discovering the deform'd estate  
Of his proud mind, preserv'd himself with hate.  
But virtue too, as well as vice, is clad  
In flesh and blood so well that Plato had  
Beheld what his high fancy once embrac'd,—  
Virtue with colours, speech, and motion grac'd.

The sundry postures of thy copious Muse,  
Who would express, a thousand tongues must use,  
Whose fate 's no less peculiar than thy art,  
For, as thou couldst all characters impart,  
So none can render thine, which still escapes,  
Like Proteus in variety of shapes,  
Who was nor this nor that, but all we find  
And all we can imagine in mankind.

EDMUND WALLER.

EVERY MAN IN  
his Humor.

As it hath beene sundry times  
*publickly acted by the right*  
Honorable the Lord Gham-  
*berlaine his servants.*

---

Written by BEN. JONSON.

---

*Quod non dant proceres, dabit Histrio.*  
*Haud tamem invidias vati, quem pulpita pascunt.*

---

Imprinted at London for Walter Burre, and are to  
be sold at his Shoppe in Pauls Church-yard.  
1601.

TITLE PAGE OF BEN JONSON'S  
"EVERY MAN IN HIS HUMOUR," 1601



## Prologue

to *Every Man in his Humour*.

**T**HOUGH need make many poets, and some such  
As art and nature have not better'd much;  
Yet ours, for want, hath not so loved the stage  
As he dare serve th' ill customs of the age,  
Or purchase your delight at such a rate,  
As for it he himself must justly hate;—  
To make a child, now swaddled, to proceed  
Man, and then shoot up, in one beard and weed,  
Past threescore years: or, with three rusty swords,  
And help of some few foot-and-half-foot words,  
Fight over York and Lancaster's long jars,  
And in the tyring-house bring wounds to scars.  
He rather prays you will be pleas'd to see  
One such to-day, as other plays should be;  
Where neither chorus wafts you o'er the seas;  
Nor creaking throne comes down, the boys to please;  
Nor nimble squib is seen, to make afeard  
The gentlewomen; nor roll'd bullet heard  
To say it thunders; nor tempestuous drum  
Rumbles, to tell you when the storm doth come;  
*But deeds and language such as men do use,  
And persons such as comedy would choose,  
When she would show an image of the times,  
And sport with human follies, not with crimes—*  
Except we make 'em such, by loving still

Our popular errors, when we know they're ill.  
I mean such errors as you'll all confess  
By laughing at them,—they deserve no less ;  
Which when you heartily do, there's hope left then,  
You that have so grac'd monsters may like men.

BEN JONSON.



## Epilogue

Written for the revival of *Every Man in his Humour*  
in 1675, by Charles, Earl of Dorset.

**E**NTREATY shall not serve, nor violence,  
To make me speak in such a play's defence;  
A play where wit and humour do agree  
To break all practis'd laws of Comedy.  
The scene (what more absurd!) in England lies;  
No gods descend, nor dancing devils rise;  
No captive prince from unknown country brought;  
No battle,— nay, there's scarce a duel fought.  
And something yet more sharply might be said,  
But I consider the poor author's dead:  
Let that be his excuse. Now for our own:  
Why, faith,— in my opinion, we need none.  
The parts were fitted well; but some will say,  
“Pox on them, rogues! what made them choose this play?”  
I do not doubt but you will credit me,  
It was not choice, but mere necessity.  
To all our writing friends in town we sent,  
But not a wit durst venture out in Lent:  
Have patience but till Easter-term, and then  
You shall have jig and hobby-horse again. . . .  
For diverse weighty reasons 'twas thought fit  
Unruly sense should still to rhyme submit:  
This, the most wholesome law we ever made,

So strictly in this epilogue obeyed,  
Sure no man here will ever dare to break

[ Enter Ghost of Jonson, interrupting: ]

Hold, and give way! for I myself will speak.  
Can you encourage so much insolence,  
And add new faults still to the great offence  
Your ancestors so rashly did commit  
Against the mighty powers of art and wit?  
When they condemned those noble works of mine,  
*Sejanus*, and my best-loved *Catiline*.  
Repent, or on your guilty heads shall fall  
The curse of many a rhyming pastoral.  
All the dull follies of the former age  
Shall find applause on this corrupted stage;  
But if you pay the great arrears of praise  
So long since due to my much injured plays,  
From all past crimes I first will set you free,  
And then inspire some one to write like me.

# Dickens and his Friends

in *Every Man in his Humour*.

1845.

“**W**E HAD chosen *Every Man in his Humour*, with special regard to the singleness and individuality of the ‘humours’ portrayed in it. . . Maclise took earnest part with us, and was to have acted, but fell away on the eve of the rehearsals; and Stanfield, who went so far as to rehearse Downright twice, then took fright and also ran away: but Jerrold, who played Master Stephen, brought with him Lemon, who took Brainworm; Leech, to whom Master Matthew was given; A’Beckett, who had condescended to the small part of William; and Mr. Leigh, who had Oliver Cob. I played Kately, and Bobadil fell to Dickens, who took upon him the redoubtable Captain long before he stood in his dress at the footlights; humouring the completeness of his assumption by talking and writing Bobadil, till the dullest of our party were touched and stirred to something of his own heartiness of enjoyment. One or two hints of these have been given, and I will only add to them his refusal of my wish that he should go and see some special performance of the *Gamester*. ‘Man of the House. *Gamester!* By the foot of Pharaoh, I will not see the *Gamester*. Man shall not force, nor horses drag, this poor gentleman-like carcass into the presence of the *Gamester*. I have said it. . . Thine as thou meritist. Bobadil (Captain). Unto Master Kately. These.’

“The play was played on the 21st of September with a success that out-ran the wildest expectation; and turned our little enterprise into one of the small sensations of the day. The applause of the theatre found so loud an echo in the press, that for the time nothing else was talked about in private circles; and after a week or two we had to yield (we did not find it difficult) to a pressure of demand for more public performance in a larger theatre, by which a useful charity received important help. . . I may not farther indicate the enjoyments that attended the success, and gave always to the first of our series of performances a preëminently pleasant place in memory.

“Of the thing itself, however, it is necessary to be said that a modicum of merit goes a long way in all such matters, and it would not be safe now to assume that ours was much above the average of amateur attempts in general. Lemon certainly had most of the stuff, conventional as well as otherwise, of a regular actor in him, but this was not of a high kind; and though Dickens had the title to be called a born comedian, the turn for it being in his very nature, his strength was rather in the vividness and variety of his assumptions, than in the completeness, finish, or ideality he could give to any part of them. . . At the same time this was in itself so thoroughly genuine and enjoyable, and had in it such quickness and keenness of insight, that of its kind it was unrivalled; and it enabled him to present in Bobadil, after a richly coloured picture of bombastical extravagance and comic exaltation in the earlier scenes, a contrast in the later of tragical humility and abasement, that had a wonderful effect. But

greatly as his acting contributed to the success of the night, this was nothing to the service he had rendered as manager. It would be difficult to describe it. He was the life and soul of the entire affair. I never seemed till then to have known his business capabilities. He took everything on himself, and did the whole of it without effort."

FORSTER'S *Life of Dickens*, Vol. II, Chap. 9.

It has been thought that it would prove interesting to reproduce the portraits of certain of the distinguished men who have taken part as actors in the production of *Every Man in his Humour*. Accordingly Shakspeare and Burbage have been chosen to represent the sixteenth century, Garrick the eighteenth, and Dickens the nineteenth.

Peculiar interest attaches to the portrait of Shakspeare here presented. It is a reproduction of the painting discovered a few years since, which now hangs in the Shakspeare house at Stratford, and which was doubtless the original of the Droeshout engraving in the First Folio. There is an interesting, though fanciful, theory that this represents Shakspeare in the part of Knowell in Jonson's comedy, — a part attributed to him because his name stands at the head of the list of actors as that of Knowell stands first among the persons of the play. James Boaden, who seems to have been the author of the theory, said that "it would be difficult to exhibit anything more descriptive than this portrait of the way in which Shakspeare looked the staid, sensible, feeling and reflecting father" in the part of Old Knowell. And Elze, in his *Life of Shakspeare*, is disposed to accept the suggestion, adding: "It is quite in keeping with the self-sufficiency of Jonson to find him specially pleased with a portrait of Shakspeare representing him as a character from one of his plays, and we have no doubt that Jonson was the happy owner of the picture. He may even have drawn it himself; . . . the portrait has every appearance of having been drawn during some theatrical performance." Without accepting these interesting guesses, one may at least linger longer over the picture for the supposition.





WILLIAM SHAKSPERE.





RICHARD BURBAGE.





DAVID GARRICK.







CHARLES DICKENS.



# Satire on a "Paul's Man"

by Joseph Hall.

1597.

The interior of old St. Paul's Cathedral was a favorite lounging-place and rendezvous, and one part of it, frequented by young gentlemen, was called "Duke Humphrey's Walk." This name was due to the mistaken notion that a monument overlooking the walk was that of Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, who died 1447. "To dine with Duke Humphrey" was Elizabethan slang for haunting this aisle of Paul's in the hope of meeting with some one who might provide a dinner. Young Ruffio, described in this satire, is clearly a prototype of Jonson's Bobadil.

**S**EEST thou how gayly my yong maister goes,  
Vaunting himselfe upon his rising toes,  
And pranks his hand upon his dagger's side,  
And picks his glutted teeth since late noon-tide?  
'Tis Ruffio: trow'st thou where he din'd to-day?  
In sooth I saw him sit with Duke Humfray.  
Many good welcomes, and much gratis cheere,  
Keepes he for everie stragglng cavaliere,  
An open house, haunted with greate resort,—  
Long service, mixt with muscally disport.  
Many faire yonker with a feather'd crest,  
Chooses much rather be his shot-free guest,  
T'o fare so freely with so little cost,  
Than stake his twelvepence to a meaner host.  
Hadst thou not told me, I should surely say  
He touch't no meat of all this live-long day.  
For sure methought—yet that was but a gesse—  
His eyes seeme sunk for verie hollownesse.

But could he have (as I did it mistake)  
So little in his purse, so much upon his backe?  
So nothing in his maw? yet seemeth by his belt  
That his gaunt gut no too much stuffing felt.  
Seest thou how side it hangs beneath his hip?  
Hunger and heavy iron makes girdles slip.  
Yet for all that, how stifly struts he by,  
All trapped in the new-found braverie.  
The nuns of new-won Cales his bonnet lent,  
In lieu of their so kind a conquerment.  
What needed he fetch that from farthest Spaine,  
His grandame could have lent with lesser paine?  
Though he perhaps ne'er pass'd the English shore,  
Yet faine would counted be a conquerour.  
His haire, French-like, stares on his frightened head,  
One lock amazon-like disheveled,  
As if he meant to weare a native cord,  
If chaunce his fates should him that bane afford.  
All British bare upon the bristled skin,  
Close notched is his beard, both lip and chin;  
His linnen collar labyrinthian set,  
Whose thousand double turnings never met;  
His sleeves half hid with elbow pinionings,  
As if he meant to flie with linnen wings.  
But when I looke, and cast mine eyes below,  
What monster meets mine eyes in human shew?  
So slender waist with such an abbot's loyne  
Did never sober nature sure conjoyne.  
Like a strawne scare-crow in the new-sowne field,

Rear'd on some sticke, the tender corne to shield;  
Or, if that semblance suit not everie deale,  
Like a broad shake-fork with a slender steel.  
Despised Nature, suit them once aright,  
Their bodie to their coate, both now mis-dight;  
Their bodie to their clothes might shapen be,  
That nill their clothes shape to their bodie.  
Meanwhile I wonder at so proud a backe,  
While th' empty guts loud rumble for long lacke.  
The belly envieth the back's bright glee,  
And murmurs at such inequality.  
The backe appeales unto the partial eyne;  
The plaintive belly pleads they bribed been;  
And he, for want of better advocate,  
Doth to the ear his injury relate.  
The back, insulting o'er the belly's need,  
Says, Thou thyself, I others' eyes, must feed.  
The maw, the guts, all inward parts complaine  
The back's great pride, and their own secret paine.  
Ye witlesse gallants, I beshrew your hearts,  
That set such discord 'twixt agreeing parts,  
Which never can be set at onement more,  
Until the maw's wide mouth be stopt with store.  
— *Virgidemiarum*, Book III, Satire 7.

# A Satire on Humours

by John Marston.

1598.

**W**HO ever heard spruce skipping Curio  
E'er prate of aught but of the whirl on toe?  
His teeth do caper whilst he eats his meat,  
His heels do caper whilst he takes his seat,  
His very soul, his intellectual,  
Is nothing but a mincing capreal.  
He dreams of toe-turns; each gallant he doth meet  
He fronts him with a traverse in the street. . . .

Luscus, what's play'd to-day? Faith, now I know  
I set thy lips abroach, from whence doth flow  
Nothing but pure Juliet and Romeo.  
Say who acts best? Drusus or Roscio?  
Now I have him that ne'er of aught did speak  
But when of plays or players he did treat—  
Hath made a commonplace-book out of plays,  
And speaks in print: at least whate'er he says  
Is warranted by Curtain *plaudites*.  
If e'er you heard him courting Lesbia's eyes,  
Say (courteous sir), speaks he not movingly,  
From out some new pathetic tragedy?  
He writes, he rails, he jests, he courts (what not?),  
And all from out his huge long-scraped stock  
Of well-penn'd plays.

Oh, come not within distance! Martius speaks,



Who ne'er discourseth but of fencing feats,  
Of *counter times*, *finctures*, sly *passatas*,  
*Stramazones*, resolute *stoccatas*,  
Of the quick change with wiping *mandritta*,  
The *carricada*, with the *embrocata*.  
"Oh, by Jesu, sir!" methinks I hear him cry,  
"The honourable fencing mystery  
Who doth not honour?" Then falls he in again,  
Jading our ears. . . .

But room for Tuscus, that jest-monging youth  
Who ne'er did ope his apish gurning mouth  
But to retail and broke another's wit.  
Discourse of what you will, he straight can fit  
Your present talk with, "Sir, I'll tell a jest"  
(Of some sweet lady, or grand lord at least).  
Then on he goes, and ne'er his tongue shall lie  
Till his engrossed jests are all drawn dry. . . .

O spruce! How now, Piso, Aurelius' ape,  
What strange disguise, what new deformed shape,  
Doth hold thy thoughts in contemplation?  
Faith say what fashion art thou thinking on?  
A stitch'd taffeta cloak, a pair of slops  
Of Spanish leather? Oh, who heard his chops  
E'er chew of aught but of some strange disguise?  
This fashion-monger, each morn 'fore he rise,  
Contemplates suit-shapes, and once from out his bed,  
He hath them straight full lively protraited.  
All fashions, since the first year of this queen,  
May in his study, fairly drawn, be seen,

And all that shall be to his day of doom ;  
For not a fashion once dare show his face,  
But from neat Piso first must take his grace :  
The long fool's coat, the huge slop, the lugg'd boot,  
From mimic Piso all do claim their root.  
O that the boundless power of the soul  
Should be coop'd up in fashioning some roll!

But O, Suffenus! that doth hug, embrace  
His proper self, admires his own sweet face ;  
Praiseth his own limbs' fair proportion ;  
Kisseth his shade, recounteth all alone  
His own good parts—who envies him? Not I,  
For well he may, without all rivalry.

Fie! whither's fled my spirit's alacrity?  
How dull I vent this humorous poesy!  
In faith I am sad, I am possess'd with ruth,  
To see the vainness of fair Albion's youth ;  
To see their richest time even wholly spent  
In that which is but gentry's ornament. . . .  
Methinks your souls should grudge and inly scorn  
To be made slaves to humours that are born  
In slime of filthy sensuality.

—*The Scourge of Villainy*, Satire XI.

*Ab Ben!*  
Say how or when  
Shall we, thy guests,  
Meet at those lyric feasts,  
Made at the Sun,  
The Dog, the Triple Tun;  
Where we such clusters had  
As made us nobly wild, not mad?  
And yet each verse of thine  
Out-did the meat, out-did the frolic wine.

*My Ben!*  
Or come again,  
Or send to us  
Thy wit's great overplus;  
But teach us yet  
Wisely to husband it,  
Lest we that talent spend;  
And having once brought to an end  
That precious stock,—the store,  
Of such a wit the world should have no more.

—Robert Herrick.

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