he echoed the verses in *Julius Cæsar*:

> And though we lay these honours on this man . . .
> He shall but bear them as the ass bears gold.

And when he wrote,

> When thou art old and rich,
> Thou hast neither heat, affection, limb nor beauty,
> To make thy riches pleasant,

he could have turned back to *The Rape of Lucrece*,

> The aged man that coffers up his gold
> Is plagued with cramps, and gouts and painful fits,
> And scarce hath eyes his treasure to behold.

These familiar reflections are expressed in this speech with the gravity of a man who has learnt to prepare himself for the coming of Death. He wrote in these days as if he had reached the Apathy of the Stoic Philosophers—and at times as if he had come to accept the darker Creed of the Cynics.

This meditation is an answer to Hamlet's puerile statement that but for the fear of other ills after death a man would rather die than endure such things as

> The pangs of despised love, the Law's delay,
> The insolence of Office, and the spurns
> That patient merit of the unworthy takes.

Young Claudio shares Hamlet's alarm (though he expresses it more nobly than Hamlet), but he only avows it to Isabella. The Duke would have looked on it as the younger Seneca did on the similar wish ascribed to Mæcenas which he called "turpissimum votum," adding "contemptissimum putarem, si vivere vellet usque ad crucem."

Seneca wrote in another Epistle: "Non videmus, quam multa nos incommoda exagitant, quam male nobis conveniat hoc corpus? Nunc de ventre, nunc de capite, nunc de pectore ac faucibus querimur: alias nervi nos alias pedes vexant." And in his twenty-fourth Epistle he wrote: "Nemo tam puer est, ut Cerberum timeat et tenebras, et larvalem habitum nudis ossibus cohærentium. Mors nos

aut consumit aut emittit. Emissis meliora restant, onere detracto : consumptis nihil restat."

Such meditations were natural to an elderly man ; but they would have been false if they had been uttered by Claudio. The division by which the fear of Life is told by the man and the fear of Death by the boy is one of the signs that this Play is later than *Hamlet.* And the Roman mood given to the Catholic Duke is one of the signs that this revision belongs to the Roman group of the Plays.

The Duke's speech has little meaning in it because we are certain that he intends to save Claudio. It belongs to a Tragi-comedy which was only begun ; a noble comment on Life. That Play is a fragment, like the masterly part of *Timon of Athens.* It is to be found in the first Scene of the first Act, but the second (which was, I think, the original beginning) seems to survive from a young Play in the mood of *Love's Labour's Lost,* and the third, though it is partly retouched, ends with lines which explained the intention of the first shallow Comedy,

> hence shall we see,
> If power change purpose, what our seemers be,

and the fourth Scene is mainly juvenile. The first thirty-one lines of the first Scene of the second Act are mature ; but then the young Play survives with the old humour condemned by Ben Jonson in his Induction to *Bartholomew Fair.* The rest of this Act is little retouched and ends with lines which belong to the first version :

> Then, Isabel, live chaste, and, brother, die :
> More than our brother is our chastity.
> I'll tell him yet of Angelo's request,
> And fit his mind to death, for his soul's rest.

Then comes the Duke's speech to Claudio and Claudio's temptation and fall, and this Scene, the first in the third Act, is the chief episode of the last Tragi-comedy. And the rest of the Play is only lightly retouched.

Measure for Measure is confused by the blending of incompatible Plays. The first form had the gaiety and the juvenile heartlessness of *Love's Labour's Lost* and *Much Ado About*

Nothing: Lucio in it was one of the Gentlemen of the Italianate Plays and as entertaining as the talk of the brothels. In the Play, as we have it, he is detestable, and he and the humour of the brothels explain Angelo's abhorrence of Vice.

One radical fault in *Measure for Measure* is the fact that there are two Angelos. The first, the mere hypocrite of a juvenile Comedy, is confused with the second, a man who loved holiness and justice and fell tempted by holiness:

> Oh cunning enemy, that, to catch a saint,
> With saints dost bait thy hook! Most dangerous
> Is that temptation that doth goad us on
> To sin in loving virtue.

There are two Isabellas also, and the heartlessness of the first still survives when she denounces her brother. So does the old careless end when, forgetting her dream of a conventual chastity, she marries the Duke and Mariana is rewarded with Angelo. But this end has a new meaning when Angelo survives like Parolles. The first Angelo would have welcomed his pardon: the second would have chosen to die. When Claudio says, "Death is a fearful thing," Isabella replies, "and shamed Life a hateful," and Angelo is condemned to shamed life.

Shakespeare may have founded this Play on a version of *Pericles* and on George Whetstone's *Right Excellent and Famous History of Promos and Cassandra*, printed in 1578. Whetstone took the story from one of Cinthio's Novelle in the *Hecatommithi* and from a Tragedy of Cinthio's called *Epitia.* And Cinthio may have copied some Oriental tale, for the Duke behaves like Haroun Al-Raschid and the heartlessness and humour would suit *The Arabian Nights' Entertainments*, or he may have founded it on a story recorded of Charles the Bold. According to this, one of Charles the Bold's favourites, Claudius Rhynsault, betrayed Sapphira Danvelt in 1468, offering to pardon her husband and executing him when she had yielded, and the Duke punished this by forcing him to marry the widow and endow her with all his wealth and beheading him. In Whetstone's and Cinthio's versions, as in that story, the lady yielded in vain. Shakespeare changed this (perhaps guided by Helena's

device in the story which he used when he wrote *All's Well that Ends Well*) because Isabella was to marry the Duke. He did this in the first form of this Play, for some of the manner of the fourth Act is juvenile, for instance, when Mariana says,

> Let me excuse me, and believe me so,
> My mirth it much displeased, but pleased my woe,

and the Duke answers,

> 'Tis good; though music oft hath such a charm.
> To make bad good, and good provoke to harm.

These lines belong to a Comedy which must have been a companion to *Love's Labour's Lost*.

The song beginning

> Take, Oh, take thy lips away,
> That so sweetly were forsworn;

is the first verse of one printed in *The Bloody Brother or Rollo Duke of Normandy*, which seems to have been mainly written by Fletcher with some help from Ben Jonson. The whole song was printed as Shakespeare's by Benson in 1640, and some students have argued that the first verse is his because it is charming. We have either to think that Fletcher or Ben Jonson annexed the verse written by Shakespeare and added another less admirable (which does not seem likely since their attitude towards him in those days would not have allowed such a compliment), or that Shakespeare borrowed this verse because it was charming, or that the Players inserted it because it was popular. Shakespeare did not write that song for this Play since it is addressed to a woman and since the verse sung by the boy would be absurd if Mariana had applied it to Angelo. But in the second Scene of the fifth Act of *The Bloody Brother* the boy is told by Edith to sing it for the entertainment of Rollo. It may be that the Players put the song instead of another when it was popular (perhaps after Shakespeare's death), for its inappropriate nature would have been nothing to them, and this seems the more probable since *The Bloody Brother* appears to have been first acted about 1616.

This cannot be disproved by the fact that this verse is more charming than anything else written by Fletcher. Thomas Campion, for instance, wrote,

> When thou must home to shades of underground,
> And there arrived, a new admired guest,
> The beauteous spirits do engirt thee round,
> White Iope, blithe Helen, and the rest,

and George Peele wrote his *Farewell to Arms*, beginning,

> His golden locks Time hath to silver turned,

and Michael Drayton wrote with a wilderness of second-rate Verse one noble Sonnet,

> Since there's no help, come, let us kiss and part,

and in this they surpassed their usual work more than Fletcher did if he wrote the whole of this song.

Shakespeare may have turned from *Measure for Measure* to *All's Well that Ends Well*, which does not seem to have been printed before 1623, guided to it by Helena's device. It may be that this Play had been called *Love's Labour's Won* and that he gave the new name with an ironical meaning, or the change may have been made in the second form of this Play and intended to show that it was no longer bracketed with *Love's Labour's Lost.* He worked on it now half-heartedly, partly because he had to deal with the intractable stuff of boyish invention : he was too old to find Comedy or charm in this story, and he saw that while Helena's behaviour and Bertram's were pardonable if the tale was fantastic and not meant to be true, they would be merely repulsive if it acquired the veracity of *Measure for Measure.*

The last Helena is subtle and wise. She can say of Parolles :

> And yet I know him a notorious liar,
> Think him a great way fool, solely a coward ;
> Yet these fixed evils sit so fit in him,
> That they take place, when virtue's steely bones
> Look bleak in the cold wind : withal, full oft we see
> Cold wisdom waiting on superfluous folly.

This is Shakespeare's cold wisdom waiting on the surviving or superfluous folly of the original Play as when the First Lord says, "The web of our life is of a mingled yarn, good and ill together: our virtues would be proud, if our faults whipped them not; and our crimes would despair, if they were not cherished by our virtues," and "Now, God delay our rebellion! as we are ourselves, what things we are!" and the Second Lord answers, "Merely our own traitors," and Parolles says after he has been fooled,

> Yet am I thankful: if my heart were great
> Twould burst at this. Captain I'll be no more;
> But I will eat and drink, and sleep as soft
> As Captain shall: simply the thing I am
> Shall make me live.

The bleak light of *Troilus and Cressida* conquers the glow of an Italianate Comedy, and the Play is left desolate with an impossible Helena degrading herself to overcome the reluctance of an impossible Bertram.

This did not happen to the three Tragi-comedies which are commonly taken as the end of his work, *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest*. *All's Well that Ends Well* was left dark because it had no irradiating Scenes like the fourth Act of *The Winter's Tale* or Imogen's adventure in *Cymbeline*. It may be that seeing this he retained the younger work in those Plays: he may have valued it more because he knew that his days of delightful imagination were over.

I think that the first three Acts of *The Winter's Tale* are a juvenile Tragedy or fantastic Romance revised or rewritten in his elderly manner half-heartedly and that the fourth is a separate Comedy written in the days when he wrote *As You Like It*, and that the fifth was added now to unite this with the rest and ennoble the Play by the passion and dignity of the second Leontes.

Cymbeline is plainly unfinished. Mr. Masefield says, "Though the writing is so careless and the construction so loose that no one can think of it as a finished Play, it has dramatic Scenes, one faultless lyric, and many marks of

beauty." And Sir Israel Gollancz says, "The text of the Play is certainly unsatisfactory, and possibly represents in many cases the Poet's rough-cast notes rather than his finished work." But instead of looking on it as unfinished elderly work, as they do, I follow Coleridge in thinking it a juvenile Play partly recast.

Even the first words of this Play must have been either illegible to Heminge and Condell or a mere note for an intended beginning. The First Folio printed them as,

> You do not meet a man but frowns
> Our bloods no more obey the Heavens
> Then our Courtiers :
> Still seem as do's the Kings.

The modern Editors have altered them thus,

> You do not meet a man but frowns : our bloods
> No more obey the Heavens than our Courtiers
> Still seem as does the King.

And even this guess remains a curious beginning for a happy Romance. Shakespeare could not have intended to leave the opening words either illegible or roughly suggested.

If these lines and many similar ones show that the manuscript of this Play was illegible, this (like the look of his last signature to his Will) may denote that he was shattered by sickness, perhaps by some form of stroke, during the last years of his life. It may be that the last revision of *Cymbeline* was in hand when he died as well as the last *Timon of Athens*.

Iachimo still says in *Cymbeline*,

> Our Tarquin thus
> Did softly press the rushes, ere he wakened
> The chastity he wounded ;

and he still notes that Imogen had been reading the story from Ovid which suggested the horrors of *Titus Andronicus*. And Cloten still echoes the criminals of *Titus Andronicus* : he says, "Posthumus, thy head, which is now growing upon thy shoulders, shall within this hour be off ; thy

mistress enforced." But Iachimo has learnt Shakespeare's cold wisdom: he can say,

> The cloyed will,
> That satiate yet unsatisfied desire, that tub
> Both filled and running, ravening first the lamb,
> Longs after for the garbage.

And Cloten has begun to be changed. The braggart and fool of the first Act and the second, of whom the Second Lord says,

> That such a crafty devil as is his mother,
> Should yield the world this Ass!

can say to himself:

> I love and hate her, for she is fair and royal, . . .
> Disdaining me and throwing favours on
> The low Posthumus slanders so her judgment
> That what's else rare is choked, and in that point
> I will conclude to hate her, nay, indeed,
> To be revenged upon her.

The two Princes still speak as young boys and the younger of them, Arviragus, says,

> I had rather
> Have skipped from sixteen years of age to sixty,
> To have turned my leaping time into a crutch,
> Than have seen this.

But in spite of this Belarius says in the third Act,

> At three and two years old I stole these boys,

and in the fifth Act he says,

> These gentle Princes,
> For such and so they are, these twenty years
> Have I trained up,

and the First Gentleman says in the first Act that the theft was "some twenty years ago." The boys to whom Belarius says,

Stoop, boys, this gate
Instructs you how to adore the Heavens, and bows you
To a morning's holy office

are now aged twenty-two and twenty-three.

When Guiderius sees Imogen (whom he has taken for a boy) carried in as dead he still says,

Oh sweetest, fairest lily!
My brother wears thee not the one half so well
As when thou grewest thyself.

Shakespeare must have been young when this was his expression of grief. The dirge was a new one, for Arviragus says,

Use like note and words
Save that "Euriphile" must be "Fidele."

Neither of these names is now sung in it, and a couple of boys making a dirge for their mother would not have sung,

Golden lads and girls all must
As chimney-sweepers, come to dust.

The last version is seen when Guiderius breaks in,

Prithee, have done,
And do not play in wench-like words with that
Which is so serious.

But his own words have been wench-like with the rest of the Episode.

The wicked Queen, who is as cruel as Tamora in *Titus Andronicus*, must be elderly since she is the mother of Cloten, who was at least thirty-five and probably older, for Belarius (who has not seen him for twenty years) says,

Long is it since I saw him,
But time hath nothing blurred those lines of favour
Which then he wore; the snatches in his voice,
And burst of speaking, were as his: I am absolute
'Twas very Cloten.

And even Imogen is mature when she is resisting Iachimo: she says, for instance,

> Since doubting things go ill often hurts more
> Than to be sure they do; for certainties
> Either are past remedies, or, timely knowing,
> The remedy then born.

This contorted manner belongs to an attempt to reshape this Play as a mature Tragi-comedy, but Shakespeare abandoned that or could not continue it. Imogen is left a girl still, though some of her talk is imitated from elderly people, and her brothers are still innocent boys, and Iachimo, instead of acquiring the subtlety of his rival, Iago, has a wisdom which renders his behaviour impossible. The innocent sweetness of the adventure in Wales gives a young glamour to the rest of the Play. And though some of the Characters in *Cymbeline* speak with an inappropriate wisdom, there is an early morning light in it still.

The light in *The Tempest* is an afternoon glow, fit to transform the cloudy end of a day. This is such a Play as a man tired of imagining sorrows and agonies might have written in an endeavour to find happiness at the end of his time. But the links which unite it with Plays openly founded on early forms or written in Youth suggest that it is a juvenile Comedy ripened and softened, and this seems supported by the apparent transformation of Ariel from a Spirit belonging to a story of Magic to a humorous Fairy.

The evidence that this Play was performed at Court in 1613 (and perhaps two years earlier) may help to show that it was not Shakespeare's last work, unless we are prepared to conclude that he abandoned his dreams for ever before he was aged fifty and three years at least (or perhaps five) before his death and to do this merely because we believe that he was speaking as Prospero. Still, since this Play, like *Cymbeline* and *The Winter's Tale*, does not seem to have been printed before 1623, he may have revised it after 1613 at a time when he knew that his health was failing, and may have meant it to be an Epilogue to the rest of his work though he may have continued to write till the pen dropped from his failing hand. If so, and if Heminge and Condell were right when they printed it as the first of his Plays, the wheel

had come full circle at last, and he was ending his dreams where he began. In that case he resembled Christopher Marlowe if (as I think) Marlowe ended his brief triumph as Faustus. But even in that case the fact that it was carefully finished seems to show that it was not the end of his work. Perhaps we ought to conclude that two Plays at least were written after it—the last version of *Cymbeline* which was unfinished, and the last form of *Timon of Athens* which was only begun.

This Play is a symbol of the whole of his work, which is a musical and magical Island. And, like most of his work, it has a Tragi-comical mood. It is a comedy with a Tragical meaning: indeed, though it ends in happiness for all except Prospero, it is Prospero's Tragedy, for he is robbed of his child and has forsaken his Magic and his beautiful Island and abandoned his vain dreams of reforming Caliban and he has only to live waiting for Death, "every third thought shall be my grave." Death has neither terror nor hope for him, for, like his brother-Duke in *Measure for Measure*, he holds that this little life is rounded with sleep. Though his story is set in Catholic times he is no more of a Catholic than Miranda, who says,

> Had I been any god of power, I would
> Have sunk the Sea within the earth.

He leaves repentance to Caliban, who says at the end,

> I'll be wise hereafter,
> And seek for grace.

This form of *The Tempest* is a Parable-play like *Every-man* or the old Spanish Apologues; but Shakespeare did not hark back to the antiquated ways of the Drama, and it is only a Parable because it is wise. Like many other Plays (*Measure for Measure* and *Julius Cæsar* and most of the Scenes of the Chronicle Pageant, for instance), it deals with the Tragedy of the Ruled and the Rulers. If this was his last comment on Life, liberty had its old meaning to him (it was still connected with "libertine") when he was ending and in his eyes men were animals in need of restraint and Freedom only a dream. The drunken Caliban shouts,

"Freedom! heyday! Freedom," when he is only exchanging one wise master for many ignorant ones, and the drunken Stephano sings, "Thought is free!" They echo Cinna, who said in the third Act of *Julius Cæsar*,

> Liberty! freedom! Tyranny is dead.
> Run hence, proclaim it, cry it about the streets,

and Casca, who said with him,

> Some to the common pulpits and cry out,
> "Liberty, freedom and enfranchisement!"

when the Conspirators had killed Julius Cæsar. And Caliban showed his interpretation of Freedom when he announced that he would get a new man.

Gonzalo agrees with this when he quotes Montaigne's Essay, *Des Cannibales.* This passage might have been written in 1603, the year in which John Florio's version of that Essay was printed or some years before that, for Florio had been engaged on his task for several years, and since he served Lord Southampton the odds are that Shakespeare was acquainted with him. Or it may have been part of the last drift of this Play. Even the light-hearted Sebastian and Antonio deride it and Gonzalo admits that he only quoted it in "a kind of merry fooling."

Montaigne wrote that Essay ironically, mocking his times, but with the belief that there was a good deal to be said for his Savages, as is showed in his *Advertissement de l'Autheur*, "Que si j'eusse esté parmy ces Nations qu'on dit vivre encore sous la douce liberté des premières loix de Nature, je t'asseure que je m'y fusse très volontiers peint tout entier et tout nud," and at the end of this Essay, "Tout cela ne va pas trop mal: mais quoy? ils ne portent point de haut de chausses." He was thinking of Plato's *Republic*, and the fragment of *Critias* and the Life of Lycurgus in his favourite Plutarch. Thomas More had shown him the way in his *Utopia*, written about 1515 with a similar intention, and Francis Bacon was to imitate *Critias* in his *New Atlantis*, first written in Latin and printed in English in 1629 after his death, and Campanella was to write his *Civitas Solis* in a Neapolitan prison about the same time.

Shakespeare answered such dreams when he drew Caliban's behaviour to Prospero. When he derided Montaigne he echoed the Scene in the fourth Act of the *Second Part of King Henry the Sixth*, which was founded on the Book of St. Alban's through the Chronicles, when Jack Cade says, "There shall be in England seven half-penny loaves sold for a penny: the three-hooped pot shall have ten hoops; and I will make it felony to drink small beer: all the Realm shall be in common; and in Cheapside shall my palfrey go to grass: and when I am King, as King I will be," and continues after the Mob shouts, "God save your Majesty!": "I thank you, good people: there shall be no money: all shall eat and drink on my score, and I will apparel all in one livery, that they may agree like brothers, and worship me their lord."

There are few signs of early work in *The Tempest* though some of the phrases are juvenile, as when Prospero says,

> The fringed curtains of thine eyes advance,
> And say what thou seest yond.

His long tale to Miranda, which is only broken by pauses when she interrupts him to let him take breath, in the second Scene may survive from a form written before Shakespeare had learnt that a Drama should be written in dialogue. And in the second Act, for instance, Sebastian and Antonio indulge in the tedious jocosity of *Love's Labour's Lost* when they talk of the Widow Dido.

In this Play, as we have it, all the principal men, except Prospero and Ferdinand and Gonzalo, are infamous. King Alonzo has forced his daughter to marry the heathen King of Tunis; his brother, the light-hearted Sebastian, proposes to murder him in his sleep, helped in this by Antonio, who has betrayed and deposed his own brother, and Trinculo and Stephano join Caliban in a plot to kill Prospero. So Gonzalo is justified when he says of the strange shapes who bring in the banquet in the third Act,

> Though they are of monstrous shape, yet, note,
> Their manners are yet more gentle-kind than of
> Our human generation you shall find
> Many, nay, almost any.

And so is Prospero when he adds,

Honest lord,
Thou hast said well, for some of you there present
Are worse than devils.

The Fortunate Island has been peopled with Calibans; but all this iniquity ends in virtue as suddenly as when the two Wicked Brothers in *As You Like It* reformed. Even Caliban is a humorous monster, eager to repay kindness with love, and though he is degraded by a human brutality his revolt is excused because Prospero had taken his Island and had made him a slave.

The old themes, first Love and the clash of Age and Youth and the treachery of those who are trusted and the laughter of fools, are all in *The Tempest*, but now they are treated with an elderly tolerance: the old sweetness is there, but it is saddened by a knowledge of truth. All the wickedness is forgiven in it because everything in Life is Illusion,

We are such stuff
As dreams are made on.

And when the Revels are over Prospero repents after all in verses which Shakespeare may have meant as an Epilogue to the whole of his work:

Now my charms are all o'erthrown,
And what strength I have's mine own,
Which is most faint: now, 'tis true,
I must be here confined by you,
Or sent to Naples. Let me not,
Since I have my dukedom got,
And pardoned the deceiver, dwell
In this bare Island by your spell;
But release me from my bands
With the help of your good hands:
Gentle breath of yours my sails
Must fill, or else my project fails,
Which was to please. Now I want
Spirits to enforce, art to enchant;

And my ending is despair,
Unless I be relieved by prayer,
Which pierces so, that it assaults
Mercy itself, and frees all faults.
As you from crimes would pardoned be,
Let your indulgence set me free.

BEN JONSON'S OPINION

IN the Laudatory Verses prefixed to the Folio of 1623 and entitled, "To the Memory of my beloved, the author, Mr. William Shakespeare, and what he hath left us," Ben Jonson wrote:

> To draw no envy, Shakespeare, on thy name,
> Am I thus ample to thy book and fame;
> While I confess thy writings to be such,
> As neither man nor Muse can praise too much. . . .
> And though thou hadst small Latin and less Greek,
> From thence to honour thee I would not seek
> For names, but call forth thundering Æschylus,
> Euripides and Sophocles to us;
> Paccuvius, Accius, him of Cordova dead,
> To life again, to hear thy buskin tread
> And shake a stage, or when thy socks were on
> Leave thee alone for the comparison
> Of all that insolent Greece or haughty Rome
> Sent forth, or since did from their ashes come.

These were conventional praises rivalled by the Verses prefixed to the First Folio of Ben Jonson's Works, printed in 1616, and by the Address to the Reader in the First Folio of Beaumont and Fletcher's Plays, printed in 1647, in which it was said that all transcendent abilities "met in Beaumont and Fletcher, whom but to mention is to throw a cloud upon all former names, and benight posterity; this book being, without flattery, the greatest monument of the Scene that Time and Humanity have produced." Ben Jonson was apt to feign admiration; for instance, when he wrote to Mount-eagle,

> My Country's parents I have many known,
> But saver of my Country thee alone,

and to King James,

> How, best of Kings, dost thou a sceptre bear,
> How, best of Poets, dost the laurel wear;

and there were times when he contradicted his verses by his sayings in Prose ; for instance, he wrote to Francis Beaumont,

> How do I love thee, Beaumont and thy Muse
> That unto me dost such religion use !

but when he spoke of him to Drummond of Hawthornden all he said was, " Francis Beaumont loved too much himself and his own verses," and though he praised Michael Drayton in Verse he told Drummond that he did not esteem Drayton and that Drayton feared him.

While Shakespeare was living Ben Jonson never wrote in his praise, except perhaps in a friendly picture of him as Cordatus in *Every Man Out of His Humour*, and since that Play was written for His Majesty's Servants and Shakespeare may have acted the part of Cordatus the friendliness of the picture was natural.

All this throws some doubt on the truthfulness of that eloquent praise, and so does the different note struck in *Discoveries.* Drummond wrote of Ben Jonson : " He is a great lover and praiser of himself ; a contemner and scorner of others ; given rather to lose a friend than a jest, jealous of every word and action of those about him, especially after drink, which is one of the elements in which he liveth." And Ben Jonson described himself in the person of Horace in *Poetaster*, when he made Captain Tucca say of him, " a sharp thorny-toothed satirical rascal ! fly him ; he carries hay in his horn ; he will sooner lose his best friend than his least jest." It would have been a remarkable thing if he, who was so famous for quarrels and angry jesting, had always treated his most dangerous rival with a friendly respect.

Nicholas Rowe did not believe that he did. After stating in his *Account of the Life of Mr. William Shakespeare*, printed in 1709, that Shakespeare had helped Jonson by recommending one of his Plays he wrote, " After this they were professed friends ; though I don't know whether the other ever made him an equal return of gentleness and sincerity. Ben was naturally proud and insolent, and in the days of his reputation did so far take upon him the supremacy of wit that he could not but look with an evil eye upon anyone that seemed to stand in competition with him. And if at times he has

affected to commend him, it has always been with some reserve, insinuating his incorrectness, a careless manner of writing and want of judgment; the praise of seldom uttering or blotting out what he writ, which was given him by the Players who were the first publishers of his works after his death, was what Jonson could not bear. He thought it impossible, perhaps, for another man to strike out the greatest thoughts in the finest expression and to reach those excellencies of Poetry with the ease of the first imagination, which himself with infinite labour and study could but hardly attain to. Jonson was certainly a very good scholar, and in that had the advantage of Shakespeare; though at the same time I believe it must be allowed that what nature gave the latter was more than a balance for what books had given the former; and the judgment of a great man upon the occasion was, I think, very just and proper. In a conversation between Sir John Suckling, Sir William Davenant, Endymion Porter, Mr. Hales of Eton and Ben Jonson, Sir John Suckling, who was a professed admirer of Shakespeare, had undertaken his defence against Ben Jonson with some warmth; Mr. Hales, who had sat still for some time hearing Ben reproaching him with want of learning and ignorance of the Ancients, told him at last that if Mr. Shakespeare had not read the Ancients he had likewise not stolen anything from them (a fault the other made no conscience of)." And he added, after saying that Shakespeare's character is best seen in his Writings, "But since Ben Jonson has made a sort of an essay towards it in his *Discoveries*, though, as I have before hinted, he was not very cordial in his friendship, I will venture to give it in his words."

Rowe's view seems supported even by the Laudatory Verses, for Jonson thought it well to begin them by repudiating a wish to draw "envy" (or ill-will) on Shakespeare's name and asserted that he had small Latin and less Greek while he praised him. It may be that the conventional praise was meant to be inappropriate, as when he wrote of Shakespeare's

> Well-turned and true-filed lines,
> In each of which he seems to shake a lance,
> As brandished at the eyes of Ignorance,

for this contradicts the opinion of him expressed in *Discoveries*

and recorded by Rowe. And Dryden, in his *Essay on Satire*, called it " an insolent, sparing, and invidious panegyric."

It is probable that Ben Jonson was born in Westminster about 1572, and worked for his stepfather, a bricklayer, (when he was a boy, and perhaps afterwards), and was taught at Westminster School. When he grew up he went to the Wars, fighting in Flanders, where (according to his own account) he won glory in single combat, killing a champion and taking his spoils. He seems to have begun his work for the Stage, acting and writing for Henslowe's Men, the Admiral's Servants, about 1592, the year in which Greene attacked Shake-scene in the *Groat'sworth of Wit*. And he won some success in Tragical work, for Meres named him among the best writers of Tragedies in 1598.

That year was important to him, for the Chamberlain's Servants acted his first Comedy, the Italianate version of *Every Man In His Humour*, on the twentieth of September (according to one of Toby Mathew's letters), and on the twenty-second of September he fought and killed one of Henslowe's Men, Gabriel Spencer. We do not know why they quarrelled, but it is possible that Jonson had given some ground of offence to Henslowe or Spencer in the same way as he seems to have caricatured Samuel Daniel as Mateo, afterwards called Mr. Matthew, a Town Gull. Jonson was then arrested for murder and only escaped the gallows by confessing his guilt and pleading Benefit of Clergy. The Middlesex Session Rolls for September, 1598, which describe him as Ben Jonson, Yeoman, say, " he confesses the indictment, asks for the book, reads like a clerk, is marked with the letter T., and is delivered, according to the Statute."

This duel or murder alienated Henslowe, who wrote in one of his letters, dated the twenty-sixth of September, 1598, " Since you were with me I have lost one of my Company, which hurteth me greatly, that is Gabriel, for he is slain in Hogden Fields by the hands of Benjamin Jonson, bricklayer." But some Player came to Jonson's help then, according to the statement addressed to him in *Satiromastix*, " Thou art the true arraigned Poet, and shouldst have been hanged, but for one of these part-takers, these charitable copper-laced Christians, that fetched thee out of Purgatory, Players I

mean." We do not know who this Player was, but (according to Rowe) Shakespeare had helped him by introducing his Comedy to the Chamberlain's Servants, and if this is true he may also have been the charitable copper-laced Christian. Shakespeare's name was first in the list of the Principal Comedians in it. They acted *Every Man Out of His Humour* in 1599, and these two years seem to have been the time of the friendship between Jonson and Shakespeare.

It is probable that the story about the Christening, told by Sir Nicholas L'Estrange on John Donne's authority among his *Anecdotes and Traditions*, printed in 1839, belongs to this time. L'Estrange wrote: "Shakespeare was godfather to one of Ben Jonson's children, and after the Christening, being in a deep study, Jonson came to cheer him up and asked him why he was so melancholy. 'No, faith, Ben,' says he, 'not I; but I have been considering a great while what should be the fittest gift for me to bestow upon my godchild, and I have resolved at last.' 'I prythee what?' say he. 'I' faith, Ben, I'll e'en give him a dozen good latten spoons and thou shalt translate them.'"

If that story belongs to this time the Christening may have been a Catholic one, for Donne was a Catholic then and so was Ben Jonson, who had adopted that Creed while he was in prison and professed it for twelve years, but forsook it in 1610, about the time when the third Earl of Southampton and many other Catholics changed. According to Drummond, after Jonson was reconciled to the Anglican Church and "left off to be a Recusant, at his first Communion, in token of his reconciliation, he drank out all the full cup of wine," and he was accustomed to say that "he was for any Religion, as being versed in both."

Jonson's first change of Religion in 1598 may have helped to inspire the attacks made on him by Marston and Dekker, who were conspicuous for their hearty dislike of Catholics: Marston, for instance, wrote in the *Scourge of Villainy* of "Peevish Papists, crouching and kneeling to dumb idols," and Dekker afterwards wrote *The Double P. P.*, a satire on the Gunpowder Plot, and *The Whore of Babylon*. In any case, his change of employment when he began working for the Chamberlain's Servants would have helped to cause these,

for Marston and Dekker were both writing for Henslowe, and so would have been glad to please him and avenge Gabriel Spencer. And they may have been caricatured in *Every Man In His Humour.*

John Marston, who was about twenty-three in 1598, first became prominent in that year as the author of *Pygmalion's Image* and *A Scourge for Villainy.* In one of these, or in his share of *Histriomastix,* he accused Jonson (as Jonson told Drummond) of having been " addicted to Venery when he was young." This charge must have dealt with recent affairs, for Jonson was only about twenty-five at this time. Jonson's natural indignation was shown with his pen as well as his cudgel, and both were ponderous weapons. He told Drummond that he had many quarrels with Marston and beat him and took his pistol from him ; and one of his *Epigrams, On Playwright,* was written to commemorate this :

> Playwright, convict of public wrongs to men,
> Takes private beatings and begins again :
> Two kinds of valour he doth show at once,
> Active in his brain and passive in his bones.

We know very little of Marston, except that he was described in *The Return from Parnassus,*

> Methinks he is a ruffian in his style,
> Withouten bands or garter's ornament ;
> He quaffs a cup of Frenchman's Helicon,
> Then roister-doister in his oily terms,
> Cuts, thrusts, and foins at whomsoe'er he meets,

and that he was in Holy Orders and held the living of Christchurch in Hampshire from 1616 to 1631 and died in London in 1634.

We know still less about Thomas Dekker : he seems to have been about twenty-eight and only beginning his admirable Plays at this time. So we can only guess which of Jonson's insults were intended for them.

Marston's attack on Jonson and the Chamberlain's Servants in *Histriomastix, or the Player Whipped,* written with Dekker in 1598 or early in 1599 and perhaps founded on an obsolete Play, began the open War of the Poets, in which these writers,

all young and struggling for fame, dealt random blows: it was a Stage-fight and the insults in it were meant to be humorous. Jonson was working with Dekker in the midst of the fray and was praised in a fulsome dedication by Marston in 1604. After his first reply, *Every Man Out of His Humour*, had been acted by the Chamberlain's Servants in 1599 another battle began, in which the Boy-Players mocked the adults. These two Stage-fights were combined, and he sided with the Children against his former employers: his three next Plays were performed by the Children of Queen Elizabeth's Chapel—*The Case is Altered* in 1599, *Cynthia's Revels* in 1600, and *Poetaster* in 1601. The Children of Paul's, a rival Company, acted *Jack Drum's Entertainment* (in which he and his mock enemies were equally blamed) late in 1600 or early in 1601, and then *Satiromastix, or the Untrussing of the Humorous Poet*, which seems to have been written or rewritten by Dekker with the assistance of Marston and others.

We cannot be certain what part (if any) Shakespeare bore in all this, but we know that his Company acted *Satiromastix* in 1601. We have no reason to think that he kept out of the fray or escaped his share of the blows. And in the *Second Part of the Return from Parnassus*, which seems to have been acted at Cambridge in 1601 and was printed in 1606, Kemp was introduced saying, "Few of the University pen Play well: they smell too much of that writer Ovid, and of that writer Metamorphoses, and talk too much of Proserpina and Jupiter. . . . Why, here is our fellow Shakespeare puts them all down, aye, and Ben Jonson, too. Oh, that Ben Jonson is a pestilent fellow! He brought up Horace, giving the poets a pill; but our fellow Shakespeare hath given him a purge that made him bewray his credit." In the same Play Judicio calls Ben Jonson, "The wittiest fellow of a bricklayer in England," and Ingenioso replies, "A mere empiric: one that gets what he hath by observation, and makes only nature privy to what he indites: so slow an inventor that he were better betake himself to his old trade of bricklaying."

Shakespeare's name does not appear in the list of the six principal Comedians who acted *Every Man Out of His Humour* in 1599, and this would be explained if he took the part of Cordatus. Mitis and Cordatus and Asper had no share in

the Play: their names were put apart from the rest in the list of the Characters (called the list of the Actors), and in the explanatory descriptions of them it was said that "Mitis is a person of no action, and therefore we have reason to afford him no character," and that Cordatus was "the author's friend, a man inly acquainted with the scope and drift of his plot; of a discreet and understanding judgment, and has the place of a moderator." Jonson himself may have taken the part of Asper, who is described thus: "He is of an ingenious and free spirit, eager and constant in reproof, without fear controlling the World's abuses. One whom no servile hope of gain or frosty apprehension of danger can make to be a parasite either to time, place or opinion."

In his first speech Asper says,

My soul
Was never ground into such oily colours,
To flatter vice and daub iniquity,
But (with an armed and resolved hand)
I'll strip the ragged follies of the time,
Naked, as at their birth,

and Cordatus breaks in,

Be not too bold!
You trouble me.

Cordatus, the judicious or prudent, and Mitis, the gentle or mild, try to restrain Asper, the harsh or exasperated.

If Jonson was Asper he took another part too, Macilente, who is described as "a man well-parted, a sufficient scholar, and travailed; who (wanting that place in the World's account, which he thinks his merit capable of) falls into such an envious apoplexy, with which his judgment is so dazzled and distasted, that he grows violently impatient of any opposite happiness in another."

Cordatus defends Shakespeare's neglect of the ancient laws of the Drama, and the Play ends with a speech in which Macilente says: "Well, gentlemen, I should have gone in and returned to you, as I was Asper at the first: but (by reason the shift would have been somewhat long, and we are loth

to draw your patience further) we'll entreat you to imagine it. . . . Marry, I will not do as Plautus in his *Amphytruo* for all this (Summi Jovis causa, Plaudite) beg a Plaudite for God's sake; but if you (out of the bounty of your good liking) will bestow it; why, you may (in time) make lean Macilente as fat as Sir John Fal-Staffe." And it may be that Jonson-Macilente retired with a bow to Shakespeare-Cordatus.

The version of Falstaff's name in this speech in the Folio of 1616 may refer to the fact that Shakespeare's name was sometimes spelt with a hyphen. This allusion may mean that Shakespeare was sometimes called by the name of his most popular Character. This seems supported by one of Sir Toby Mathew's letters, in which he wrote after Shakespeare's death, "as that excellent author, Sir John Falstaff, says, 'what for your business, news, device, foolery and liberty, I never dealt better since I was a man.'" And it may be also shown by Lady Southampton's letter in which she wrote to her husband while he was in Ireland with Essex in 1599: "All the news I can send you that I think will make you merry is that I read in a letter from London that Sir John Falstaff is by his mistress, Dame Pintpot, made father of a goodly miller's thumb, a boy that's all head and very little body, but this is a secret."

Otherwise this allusion may indicate that Jonson was said to be depicted as Falstaff and repudiated this on the ground that he did not resemble the fat Knight in his girth. He seems to have been lean at this time, for *Satiromastix* said, "Horace was a goodly corpulent gentleman, and not so lean a hollow-cheekt scrag as thou art," and in *Every Man Out of His Humour* Carlo Buffone calls Macilente "a raw-boned anatomy"; but Kemp called him fat in his *Nine Days' Wonder*, printed in April, 1600, if he described him as the "fat filthy ballet-maker." Even if he was lean then, he may have resembled Falstaff in his manner of life, as it is certain that he did in his boasting. And he could not have pleaded that difference in the days when he wrote in the *Epistle to Mr. Arthur Squib*, printed in *Underwoods*, in 1640, that his weight was twenty stone lacking two pounds, and in the *Poet to the Painter*,

Why, though I seem of a prodigious waist,
I am not so voluminous and vast,
But there are lines wherewith I might be embraced.

'Tis true, as my womb swells, so my back stoops,
And the whole lump grows round, deformed, and droops,
And yet the Tun at Heidelberg had hoops.

Falstaff might have written the verses called *My Picture Left in Scotland* which Jonson wrote after his visit to Drummond:

Oh, but my conscious fears
That fly my thoughts between,
Tell me that she hath seen
My hundreds of grey hairs,
Told seven and forty years,
Read so much waste as she cannot embrace
My mountain belly and my rocky face,
And all these through her eyes have stopped her ears.

Falstaff might have been treated by Prince Hal as Ben Jonson was by young Ralegh in Paris in 1612 or 1613, according to the story he told to Drummond: "This youth, being knavishly inclined, amongst other pastimes caused him to be drunken and dead drunk, so that he knew not where he was; hereafter laid him on a car which he made to be drawn by pioneers through the streets, at every corner showing his governor stretched out." And Jonson as he was seen in his later days revelling at the Dog or the Triple Tun with the boys whom he sealed of the Tribe of Ben, when (according to Aubrey) "he would many times exceed in drink—canary was his beloved liquor," must have resembled the merry Knight of the Plays. If Pistol was drawn from Marston (as was suggested by Mr. George Wyndham in his *Essay on the Poems of Shakespeare*, and by Mr. Seccombe and Mr. Allen in their *Age of Shakespeare*) this would support the theory that Jonson was recognized as caricatured in Shakespeare's transformed version of the traditional Knight.

The picture of Cordatus remains the only thing in Ben Jonson's Works which can be taken as indicating a liking for Shakespeare, except the two tributes paid when Shakespeare

was dead. And the Folio of 1616 also contains an Epigram called *On Poet-Ape* :

> Poor Poet-Ape, that would be thought our chief,
> Whose works are e'en the frippery of wit,
> From brocage is become so bold a thief,
> As we, the robbed, leave rage, and pity it.
> At first he made low shifts, would pick and glean,
> Buy the reversion of old Plays ; now grown
> To a little wealth, and credit in the *Scene*,
> He takes up all, makes each man's wit his own,
> And, told of this, he slights it. Tut, such crimes
> The sluggish gaping auditor devours ;
> He marks not whose 'twas first : and after-times
> May judge it to be his, as well as ours.
> Fool ! as if half eyes will not know a fleece
> From locks of wool, or shreds from the whole piece !

This Epigram resembles the passage in the *Groat'sworth of Wit*, printed in 1592, in which Greene wrote, " There is an upstart crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his *Tiger's heart wrapped in a Player's hide* supposes he is as well able to bombast out a Blank Verse as the best of you ; and being an absolute Johannes fac totum is in his own conceit the only Shake-scene in a country. . . . Let these apes emulate your past excellence, and never more acquaint them with your admired inventions."

Jonson may have borrowed the name Poet-Ape from Sidney's *Apology for Poesy*, in which it was said that the cause why Poetry is not esteemed in England is the fault of Poet-Apes not Poets. But he may have intended the name Poet-Ape to mean Poet-Player, for he was accustomed to call the Players " apes " as in the song in *Poetaster*, in which he referred to the clothes worn by some of them in Royal processions,

> Detraction is but baseness, varlet,
> And apes are apes though clothed in scarlet,

and in the Apologetical Dialogue to that Play,

> The crimes these whippers reprehend,
> Or what their servile apes gesticulate,

and in the Prologue to it,

> The conjuring means
> Of base detractors and illiterate apes.

Donald Lupton, for instance, gave them this name in his *London and the Country Carbonadoed*, printed in 1632; he wrote of them, "All their care is to be like Apes to imitate and express other men's actions in their own persons." And the *Return from Parnassus* called a Player "a mimic Ape." If we could be sure that Ben Jonson used Poet-Ape to mean Poet-Player there would be the more reason to think that this Epigram was an insult to Shakespeare.

He may have written it either when he was working for Henslowe or about 1601, developing it from the Verses in *Poetaster*,

> Are there no Players here? no Poet-Apes
> That come with basilisk eyes? whose forked tongues
> Are steeped in venom as their hearts in gall?

in the same way as he expanded the Author's last words in the Apological Dialogue printed with that Comical Satire,

> There is something comes into my thought,
> That must, and shall, be sung, high and aloof,
> Safe from the Wolves black jaw, and the dull Asses hoof,

when he wrote in the *Ode to Himself*, printed in *Underwoods* in the Folio of 1641,

> And since our dainty age,
> Cannot endure reproof,
> Make not thyself a page,
> To that strumpet the Stage,
> But sing, high and aloof,
> Safe from the Wolves black jaw and the dull Asses hoof.

The charge that Poet-Ape's Works were the frippery of wit seems a sign that he was mainly successful as a writer of Comedies, and this would have been true of Shakespeare before *Julius Cæsar*, as we have it, was written. But Jonson never praised Shakespeare's Tragedies: even in his Laudatory Verses prefixed to the Folio of 1623 he only professed to

think that he could be compared with the Romans and Greeks when he wrote Comedies, " when thy socks were on," and he expressed his opinion of the Chronicle Pageant in the Prologue to *Every Man In His Humour* :

> With three rusty swords
> And help of some few foot-and-half-foot words
> Fight over York and Lancaster's long jars.

We do not know when the Prologue to *Every Man In His Humour* was written, for that Play was printed without it in 1600 and revised later, perhaps in 1601. The Prologue may have been written during the War of the Poets, and this would explain why, as Mr. George Wyndham has said, " the whole tirade is an attack in set terms on the kind of Play which Shakespeare wrote and which the Public preferred before Jonson's."

In the Induction to *Cynthia's Revels* the Third Child says, " It is in the general behaviour of this fair society here, that I am to speak, at least the more judicious part of it, which seems much distasted with the immodest and obscene writing of many, in their Plays. Besides, they could wish your Poets would leave to be Promoters of other men's jests, and to waylay all the stale *Apophthegms* or old books they can hear of (in print or otherwise) to farce their *Scenes* withal. That they would not so penuriously glean wit, from every laundress or hackney-man, or derive their best grace (with servile imitation) from Common Stages, or observation of the company they converse with, as if their invention lived wholly upon another man's trencher. Again, that feeding their friends with nothing of their own, but what they have twice or thrice cooked, they should not wantonly give out how soon they had drest it ; nor how many coaches came to carry away the broken-meat, besides hobbyhorses and footcloth nags. . . . They say the *umbræ*, or ghosts of some three or four Plays, departed a dozen years since, have been seen walking on your Stage here : take heed, boy, if your house be haunted by such *hobgoblins*, 'twill fright away all your spectators quickly."

This may be another humorous description of Shakespeare, who was prone to repeat stale apophthegms and imitated the

Common Stages, the Players, and observed his companions and produced three or four twice- or thrice-cooked Plays at this time, the ghosts of others departed a "dozen years since," when he was beginning to write.

One Play commonly dated about this time, 1600, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, could be accused of gleaning wit from laundresses, and it is said to have been written in a very short time. John Dennis wrote of it in the dedication of the *Comical Gallant*, printed in 1702:

> But Shakespeare's Play in fourteen days was writ,
> And in that space to make all just and fit
> Were an attempt surpassing human wit.

This Play seems to refer to Jonson's Humours; for instance, Nym says in the third Scene of the first Act, "the good humour is to steal at a minute's rest," and "the anchor is deep: will that humour pass?" and "the humour rises; it is good: humour me the angels," and "I thank thee for that humour," and "I will run no base humour: here take the humour-letter," and "I have operations which be humours of revenge," and "I will discuss the humours of this love to Page," and "my humour shall not cool." And one of Pistol's remarks in the same Scene, "he hath studied her will, and translated her will, out of honesty into English," seems like one of the usual jests about Jonson's frequent translations. Jonson was always amorous: he wrote long afterwards,

> Let it not your wonder move,
> Less your laughter, that I love.
> Though I now write fifty years—
> I have had and have my peers.
> Poets, though divine, are men,
> Some have loved as old again.

If he had been taken to be depicted as Falstaff this Comedy might have been hastily revived and reshaped with an intent to annoy him after he quarrelled with the Chamberlain's Servants.

In the third Act of *Cynthia's Revels*, Crites-Jonson says that he has been

Where I have seen (most honoured Arete)
The strangest pageant fashioned like a Court,

and describes the men he has seen there, beginning with a Tragical Player, probably Burbage, and including one of whom he says,

Another swears
His *Scene* of courtship over; bids, believe him,
Twenty times, ere they will; anon, doth seem
As he would kiss his hand away in kindness;
Then walks off melancholic and stands wreathed
As he were pinned up to the Arras thus.

The Player who often talks of retiring from the Stage and is apt to be effusively friendly and then stands apart with his arms folded and his back to the wall and lost in melancholy, may have been meant for Shakespeare, who was shown in the only description by name which has survived (L'Estrange's story of his jest at the Christening) in a deep study and apparently mournful on a festive occasion.

Ben Jonson's elephantine jocosity leaves his Stage enemies vague and different in his different onslaughts. It may be that he was not able to draw the Characters truthfully in these Comedies or that he had no such intention.

Though he told Drummond some twenty years afterwards that he had written *Poetaster* against Marston, it does not follow from this that he had intended to draw Marston as the chief Poetaster, who is named Rufus Laberius Crispinus or Crispinas. The name Crispinus might be taken as showing that this Character was meant to be Dekker, who is said to have been the son of a cobbler and had written the *Shoemaker's Holiday* in 1599, for St. Crispin was the patron of shoemakers. And this seems supported when Crispinus is shown to be afraid of his creditors, for Henslowe's Diary proves that Dekker had been imprisoned for debt in 1598. But Dekker seems to have recognized that he had been drawn as Demetrius Fannius, Playdresser and Plagiary, and the name Crispinus was found in Horace's *Satires*.

Laberius was the Equestrian Roman who wrote vulgar farces or Mimes, and complained that he had been degraded

when Cæsar forced him to appear on the Stage. Horace wrote of him in the tenth Satire :

Et Laberi mimos, ut pulchra poemata, mirer.

This name has no link with either Dekker or Marston.

The name Rufus suggests that the Poetaster had auburn or tawny hair. This has not been recorded of either Marston or Dekker. The Poetaster's hair was conspicuous, for Chloe says to him, " and shall your looks change ? and your hair change ? " and when he replies, " Why, a man may be a poet and yet not change his hair," she answers : " Well, we shall see your cunning : yet if you can change your hair, do." The Poetaster was forced to vomit new-fangled words, and this appears a possible link with Marston who was addicted to them. But he was above all things effeminate, while Marston must have been a brave man, since he was willing to court repeated thrashings from one of Jonson's size and ferocity.

In the first scene of the second Act Chloe says to Crispinus, " Are you a gentleman born ? " and he replies, " That I am, lady, you shall see mine Arms, if it please you." She says then, " No, your legs do sufficiently show you are a gentleman born, sir ; for a man borne upon little legs is always a gentleman borne." And he rejoins, " Yet, I pray you, vouchsafe the sight of my Arms, Mistress ; for I bear them about me, to have them seen : my name is Crispinus or Cri-spinas, indeed ; which is well expressed in my Arms (a Face crying *in chief*, and beneath it a bloody Toe, between three Thorns *pungent*)." Neither Marston nor Dekker spelt his name with a hyphen. Dekker had no claim to bear Arms, and Marston had no need to assert a gentle descent, for he was known to be one of the Marstons of Shropshire who bore as their crests a Demi-eagle and a Demi-greyhound.

Crispinus begins in the second Act with the words, " I am very well, sir. Ne'er trust me, but you are most excellently seated here, full of sweet delight and blandishment ! An excellent air. . . . I am most strenuously well, I thank you, sir." He speaks throughout with this affectation, which resembles the tone of Shakespeare's young men in his Italianate Comedies, and, like Cordatus, in *Every Man Out of His Humour*, and the writer attacked in *Cynthia's Revels* he

observes everything. When Chloe says to him, "Is that the fashion of courtiers?" he replies, "I assure you it is, lady, I have observed it," and when she says, "Good master Crispinus, you can observe, you say," he answers, "I warrant you, sweet lady, let me alone to observe till I turn myself to nothing but observation." In the third Act he sees Horace (who is meant to be Jonson) and says to himself, "Yonder's Horace: they say he is an excellent Poet: Mæcenas loves him. I'll fall into his acquaintance if I can. I think he be composing as he goes in the street! ha? 'tis a good humour, and he be: I'll compose too," and accosts him, saying, "Sweet Horace, Minerva and the Muses stand auspicious to thy designs. How farest thou, sweet man, frolic? rich? gallant? ha?" He says afterwards: "We are a gentleman, besides, our name is Rufus Laberius Crispinus: we are a pretty Stoic too," and Horace answers, "to the proportion of your beard, I think it, sir." Later in the same Scene Crispinus says, "I protest to thee, Horace (do but taste me once), if I do know myself and mine own virtues truly, thou wilt not make that esteem of Varius or Virgil or Tibullus, or any of them indeed, as now in thy ignorance thou dost; which I am content to forgive: I would fain see which of these could pen more verses in a day, or with more facility, than I." And he asks Horace to make him known to Mæcenas and says, "I'll bribe his porter and the grooms of his chamber; and make his doors open to me that way, first: and then I'll observe my times." He is shown to be transparently vain, but he tries to hide this with an affectation of modesty.

Crispinus bears a curious resemblance to the account of Boyet in the fifth Act of *Love's Labour's Lost*, of whom it was said that he kissed away his hand in courtesy (like the Player described in *Cynthia's Revels*):

> The ladies call him sweet. . . .
> And consciences that will not die in debt
> Pay him the due of honey-tongued Boyet.

Since Shakespeare's name was sometimes spelt with a hyphen (Shake-speare), as in the *Sonnets* of 1609, he may have been exposed to the taunt that he did this in support of his claim to the Arms which he had obtained recently, in 1599;

"Gold on a bend sable, a spear of the first" with as a crest "a falcon holding a spear." The Bust at Stratford-on-Avon seems to show that his hair was tawny or auburn, and all the alleged portraits of him agree that he wore it long: and the name Rufus suggested his also because it was linked with King William Rufus. He wrote Mimes like Laberius, and (like him) the Poet in his *Sonnets* complained that he was degraded by the life of the Stage. The Droeshout Engraving suggests that he had a scanty beard like Crispinus and, like him, a frail body and little legs. Like Crispinus he was compared to Mercury, as when Freeman wrote in *Rubbe and a Great Cast*, which was printed in 1614,

> Shakespeare, that nimble Mercury thy brain,
> Lulls many hundred Argus eyes asleep.

He seems to have been taunted with vanity when Greene wrote in the *Groat'sworth of Wit* of an upstart who "is in his own conceit the only Shake-scene in a country." His facility in writing was famous, and his way of observing everything was commonly recognized, as when John Aubrey wrote of him in the *Lives of Eminent Men*, "Ben Jonson and he did gather humours of men daily wherever they came." And ten, at least, of the thirty "crudities" (such as reciprocal, retrograde and defunct), which are ascribed to Crispinus can be found in his Plays.

It may be that Crispinus was partly intended as a caricature of Shakespeare (of whom Rowe recorded that he was "of too great sweetness in his manners"), as he was in the days when he may still have resembled the youths in his Italianate Comedies.

In that case the clumsy caricature was drawn without venom. Ben Jonson's Mæcenas in those days was Esme Stuart, Seigneur D'Aubigny, commonly called Lord D'Aubigny. If Shakespeare wished to make his acquaintance, as Crispinus did, it was only (as this version admits) because he wished to observe the lives of such men.

Some of the Parodies in the third Act are plainly imitations of Shakespeare. For instance, "Why, then, lament therefore: damned be thy guts unto King Pluto's hell and princely Erebus, for sparrows must have food," seems meant to

reproduce Pistol, who says in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, "young ravens must have food."

Ben Jonson wrote in the Prologue to this Play,

> If any muse why I salute the Stage
> An armed Prologue; know, 'tis a dangerous age:
> Wherein, who writes, had need present his *Scenes*
> Forty-fold proof against the conjuring means
> Of base detractors, and illiterate apes,
> That fill up rooms in fair and formal shapes.

And Shakespeare wrote in the Prologue to *Troilus and Cressida*,

> Hither am I come
> A Prologue armed, but not in confidence
> Of author's pen, or actor's voice, but suited
> In like conditions as our argument.

This apparent allusion seems to support the belief that a form of *Troilus and Cressida* produced at this time was the purge mentioned in the *Return from Parnassus*. If this was the purge which repaid the pill, we can infer that *Poetaster* had given Shakespeare some particular ground for taking offence. Such a ground would be visible if we could conclude that he had been drawn as Crispinus, but he had no call to avenge Marston or Dekker.

If (as I think) Mr. George Wyndham was right in identifying Ajax with Jonson and Thersites with Marston, this makes it certain that Marston was not drawn as Crispinus. The account of Carlo Buffone prefixed to *Every Man Out of His Humour*, "a public scurrilous and profane jester, that (more swift than Circe) with absurd *similes* will transform any person into deformity. . . . His religion is railing, and his discourse ribaldry," could have described Shakespeare's Thersites. And so could Cordatus' description of him in the Prologue: "He is one, the Author calls him Carlo Buffone, an impudent common jester, a violent railler and an incomprehensible Epicure. . . . He will sooner lose his soul than a jest, and profane even the most holy things to excite laughter: no honourable or reverend personage whatsoever can come within the reach of his eye, but is turned into all manner of variety by his adulterate similes." The same

Character is drawn as an Anaides, the shameless, in *Cynthia's Revels*, where, for instance, Crites says of Hedon and Anaides,

> The one, a light voluptuous reveller,
> The other a strange arrogating puff,
> Both impudent and arrogant enough :
> They talk (as they are wont) not as I merit :
> Traduce by custom, as most dogs do bark,
> Do nothing out of judgment but disease.

If Carlo Buffone and Anaides were intended for Marston, so was Thersites. He may have been also drawn as Captain Bobadil in *Every Man in His Humour*, and as Captain Tucca in *Poetaster*, and as Pistol by Shakespeare, and none of these Characters bears any resemblance to the effeminate Poetaster Crispinus. They all resemble Ralph Roister Doister, and this seems to support the description of him in the *Return from Parnassus.*

The Interlude of Thersites and Ajax in *Troilus and Cressida* seems a savage attack on Marston combined with a humorous description of Jonson. This seems a sign that Shakespeare resented something written by Marston much more than Jonson's jocosity, but even if we could be sure what it was, it would be of no value because Marston was impartially scurrilous. His reason for coupling them may be explained by Nestor's statement that Ajax—

> Makes factious feasts ; rails on our state of war
> Bold as an Oracle, and sets Thersites,
> A slave whose gall coins slanders like a mint,
> To match us in comparisons with dirt.

It may be that Jonson was suspected of acting in this way in the War of the Poets, fighting a sham battle with Marston while encouraging him to hurl his insults at others. But Ajax does not do this in the Play. Thersites haunts him with insults and is rewarded with beatings, and he says in the third Scene of the second Act : " Shall the elephant Ajax carry it thus ? He beats me, and I rail at him. Oh, worthy satisfaction ! Would it were otherwise ; that I could beat him whilst he railed at me." This seems an allusion to the beatings which Jonson had inflicted on Marston. Thersites' part in

this Play is to insult the rest and provoke discord between them, as Marston did in the War of the Poets and as Captain Tucca did in *Poetaster*, and he says in the fifth Act, "Now they are clapper-clawing one another, I'll go look on." He hates and despises himself and everyone else: he says, "I am a rascal; a scurvy railing knave; a very filthy rogue." And Hector spares him for that reason and answers, "I do believe thee. Live." All this may well show that Thersites is a picture of Marston, and this is made the more probable when he is introduced with the words—

> When rank Thersites opes his mastic jaws,

for this may be an allusion to *Histriomastix*, or to the fact that he signed himself *Theriomastix* in the *Scourge of Villainy*.

Ajax seems a picture of Jonson. Alexander says of him in the first Act: "This man, lady, hath robbed many beasts of their particular additions; he is as valiant as the lion, churlish as the bear, slow as the elephant: a man into whom nature hath so crowded humours that his valour is crushed into folly, his folly sauced with discretion: there is no man hath a virtue that he hath not a glimpse of, nor any man an attaint but he carries some stain of it: he is melancholy without cause and merry against the hair: he hath the joints of everything; but everything so out of joint that he is a gouty Briareus, many hands and no use, or purblind Argus, all eyes and no sight." And Cressida answers, "But how should this man, that makes me smile, make Hector angry?" Thersites says of him in the third Scene of the third Act: "Why a' stalks up and down like a peacock—a stride and a stand: ruminates like an hostess that hath no arithmetic but her brain to set down her reckoning: bites his lips with a politic regard, as who should say, 'There were wit in this head an' 'twould out': and so there is; but it lies as coldly in him as fire in a flint, which will not show without knocking. The man's undone for ever; for if Hector break not his neck in the combat, he'll break it himself in vainglory. He knows not me: I said 'Good morrow, Ajax,' and he replies, 'Thanks, Agamemnon.'"

Thersites' account resembles Jonson's picture of Horace in *Poetaster*, and it may be that Ajax' failure to recognize

Thersites refers to Horace's attitude when he was addressed by Crispinus. The picture of Ajax in these passages and in the rest of the Play may be a retort to the attack on Crispinus, for while the Poetaster was depicted as garrulous and childishly vain and excessively friendly and given to boasting his facility and his skill in observing all the ways of the World, Ajax is shown melancholy and full of vainglory and as churlish as the bear and as slow as the elephant, a purblind Argus, all eyes and no sight. This picture is by no means unfriendly, and it agrees with Hector's words after their battle,

> Let me embrace thee, Ajax:
> By him that thunders, thou hast lusty arms;
> Hector would have them fall upon him thus.

The reconciliation between Hector and Ajax after these words may have led to another between Shakespeare and Jonson, for the Chamberlain's Servants performed Jonson's next Play, *Sejanus*, in 1603, and Shakespeare acted in it. But if they were reconciled this did not prevent Jonson from helping Marston and Chapman to write *Eastward Ho* (in which Shakespeare was parodied) in 1605.

There may be a side-light on Jonson's attitude to Shakespeare in *Kemp's Humble Request*. William Kemp, who had been greatly admired as Peter in *Romeo and Juliet* and as Dogberry in *Much Ado About Nothing*, quarrelled with the Chamberlain's Servants in 1599 and published his *Nine Days' Wonder* in April, 1600. He added to it *Kemp's Humble Request to the impudent generation of Ballet-makers and their adherents*:

"My notable Shake-rags,—

"I have made a privy search what private Jig-monger of your jolly number hath been the author of those abominable Ballets written of me. . . .

"Still, the search continuing, I met a proper upright youth, only for a little stooping in the shoulder, all heart to the heel, a penny Poet whose first making was a miserable stolen story of Mac-Doel or Mac-Dobeth or Mac-Somewhat, for I am sure a Mac it was, though I never had the maw to see it: and he told me there was a fat filthy ballet-maker

that should have once been his journey-man to his trade, who lived about the town, and ten to one! but he had thus terribly abused me and my Tabourer for that he was able to do such a thing in print. A shrewd presumption!

"I found him about the Bankside sitting at a Play. I desired to speak with him, had him to a tavern, charged a pipe of tobacco, and then laid this terrible accusation to his charge. He swells presently like one of the four Winds. The violence of his breath blew the tobacco out of his pipe, and the heat of his wrath drank dry two bowls of Rhenish Wine. At length, having power to speak, 'Name my accuser,' saith he, 'or I defy thee, Kemp, at the quart-staff.'

"I told him and all his anger turned to laughter, swearing it did him good to have ill-words of a hoddy-doddy, a habber-de-hoy, a chicken, a squib, a squall! one that hath not wit enough to make a ballet, but by Pol and Ædipol! would Pol his father, Derick his dad, do anything, how ill so-ever, to serve his apish humour.

"I hardly believed this youth, that I took to be gracious, had been so graceless; but I heard afterwards his mother-in-law was eye and ear-witness to his father's abuse by this blessed child, on a public Stage, in a Merry Host of an Inn's part.

"Yet, all this while could not I find the true Ballad-maker, till, by chance a friend of mine pulled out of his pocket a book in Latin called *Mundus Furiosus*, printed at Cullen, written by one of the vilest and arrantest cullians that ever wrote a book, his name Jansonus. . . . This beggarly lying busybody's name brought out the Ballad-maker's, and it was generally confirmed it was his kinsman."

This Ballad-maker may have been Richard Johnson, as Mr. Andrew Lang has suggested in his *Social History of England in the Seventeenth Century*. If so, it is probable that the fat filthy Ballet-maker who was taken for him was one who had a similar name, Ben Jonson, whose habitual drinking feats and violence suit the scene in the tavern. And in that case the Shake-rag whose apish humour led him to send the dancing Clown to accuse his former journeyman, may well have been Shakespeare. Mr. Andrew Lang inclined to that

view, saying, " Kemp's Shake-rag is much in the style of Greene's Shake-scene." For all we know, Kemp may have been much older than Shakespeare, and this would help to explain why he stopped acting in 1599. If so, he might have called him a youth, or this may have referred to his looks, for if the Ely House Portrait is genuine Shakespeare looked young in 1603.

If Shakespeare was that Poet the charge that he had abused his father as the Merry Host of an Inn may mean that the Host in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* was said to have been drawn from his father. If so, the statement that his mother-in-law witnessed the Comedy may have been a mistake, since mother-in-law commonly meant stepmother then. About 1656 Archdeacon Thomas Plume, who was born in 1630, wrote that Shakespeare was the son of a glover and that " Sir John Mennes saw once his old father in a shop, a merry-cheeked old man." This statement is open to doubt, since the only Sir John Mennes of whom we have record was born in 1599, but Plume may have blundered in repeating the anecdote. If John Shakespeare was a merry old man he may have been drawn as the Merry Host of the Garter. If Shakespeare drew a humorous sketch of his father in a form of this Comedy, which may have been meant for the amusement of Stratford, he did no more than Charles Dickens did when he described Mr. Micawber, who (according to Mr. George Wyndham) probably resembled John Shakespeare.

If Kemp meant that Shakespeare set him to plague Ben Jonson they are seen in this anecdote as they are in L'Estrange's tale of the Christening: Jonson is a good-humoured butt in both stories since (according to Kemp) his anger ended in laughter. And Shakespeare's attitude in both is the same as it is in the only other anecdote told of his London days, the tale written in John Manningham's Diary in the year after *Kemp's Humble Request* was published according to which he overheard his friend Burbage promising to visit a lady and forestalled him, and told him that William the Conqueror was before Richard the Third.

The two first of these three stories are the only possible traces of wit-combats between Shakespeare and Jonson. Fuller wrote about Shakespeare in his *Worthies of Warwickshire*,

printed in 1662 : " Indeed, his learning was very little, so that as Cornish diamonds are not polished by any lapidary, but are pointed and smooth, even as they are taken out of the earth, so Nature itself was all the art that was used upon him. Many were the wit-combats betwixt him and Ben Jonson, which two I behold like a Spanish great galleon and an English man-of-war, Master Jonson (like the former) was built far higher in Learning, solid but slow in his performance : Shakespeare, with the English man-of-war, lesser in bulk but lighter in sailing, could turn with all tides, tack about and take advantage of all the winds by the quickness of his wit and invention." Of course, Fuller did not see such wit-combats since he was born in 1608 ; and nobody else recorded them. Beaumont's Verses to Jonson,

> What things have we seen
> Done at the Mermaid !

refer to days when (I think) Shakespeare was at Stratford-on-Avon, for Beaumont began to write for the Stage in 1607, and Herrick's *Ode for Ben Jonson*,

> Ah, Ben !
> Say how or when
> Shall we, thy guests,
> Meet at those lyric feasts
> Made at the Sun,
> The Dog, the Triple Tun,

refers to still later days, for Herrick was born in 1591.

The only trace of a merry-meeting is found in the note written between 1661 and 1663, by John Ward, who was Vicar of Stratford from 1662 to 1668 : " Shakespeare, Drayton and Ben Jonson had a merry-meeting, and it seems drank too hard, for Shakespeare died of a fever there contracted. Remember to peruse Shakespeare's Plays and be versed in them, that I may not be found ignorant in that matter." If John Ward had perused Drayton's Poems and the *Return from Parnassus* into the bargain, he might have changed his account of a meeting which happened (if he was right) some thirteen years before he was born.

Michael Drayton was notoriously sober : the *Return from*

Parnassus said of him, "He wants one true note of a Poet of our times: and that is this; he cannot swagger it well in a tavern nor domineer in a hothouse." And he never called Shakespeare a friend. In his *Elegy of Poets and Poesie*, printed in 1627, he claimed five Poets as friends, Sir William Alexander of Menstries (afterwards the first Earl of Stirling) and William Drummond and the two Beaumonts and William Browne,

> Then the two Beaumonts and my Browne arose,
> My dear companions, whom I freely chose
> My bosom friends; and in their several ways
> Rightly born Poets, and in these last days,
> Men of much note and no less nobler parts,
> Such as have freely told to me their hearts,
> As I have mine to them.

But he only praised Shakespeare tepidly in conjunction with Nashe's skill in taking revenge by Satire,—

> And, be it said of thee,
> Shakespeare, thou hadst as smooth a Comic vein
> Fitting the sock, and in thy natural brain
> As strong conception and as clear a rage
> As anyone that trafficked with the Stage.

He admired Jonson more, though he did not assert friendship with him,—

> Learned Jonson in this list I bring,
> Who had drunk deep of the Pierian Spring,
> Whose knowledge did him worthily prefer,
> And long was Lord here of the Theatre,
> Who in opinion made out learnedest to stick
> Whether in poems rightly dramatic,
> Strong Seneca or Plautus, he or they
> Should bear the buskin or the sock away.

Drayton was born in Warwickshire a year before Shakespeare, and was accustomed to sing the praises of the Forest of Arden,

> Fair Arden, thou my Tempe art alone,

and spent his manhood mainly in London among the writers till 1603, and used to spend his Summers at Clifford Chambers, the home of his life-long friend, Lady Rainsford, about four miles from Stratford-on-Avon. Since this might have helped to make him intimate with Shakespeare his reticence is all the more notable. There may have been some old quarrel between them or, perhaps, he was too proud to consort with a mere townsman of Stratford, for the five friends he named were his superiors by birth.

We do not know when his *Elegy of Poets* was written, but this was probably after 1614. The Elegy printed first in the same volume was probably written in 1614, for he wrote of the hard winter,

> The Thames was not so frozen yet this year
> As is my bosom,

and that was a year famous for cold. Ben Jonson never recorded any visit to Stratford, though it is possible that he passed through that town on the way to the short visit to Sir Henry Goodyere commemorated in one of his *Epigrams* :

> Goodyere, I am glad, and grateful to report
> Myself a witness of thy few days' sport :
> Where I both learnt why wise men hawking follow
> And why that bird was sacred to Apollo.

Since he knew Drayton and since Lady Rainsford was Goodyere's sister he may have broken the journey at Clifford Chambers. But this was probably written before 1612, the year in which he obtained a licence to publish the Epigrams printed in the Folio of 1616.

The odds are that John Ward, or the person who told him this tale, made the mistake which others have shared when they have concluded that Jonson and Drayton and Shakespeare must have been friends because they were rivals. Nicholas Rowe had never heard of any such friendship, for he wrote of Shakespeare, " What particular habitude or friendship, he contracted with private men I have not been able to learn." And when Shakespeare made his last Will he left the usual legacies to be spent in the purchase of memorial-rings, but

he did not select Jonson or Drayton or any other literary rival of his.

When Drayton wrote that Ben Jonson

> Long was Lord here of the Theatre

he recorded a view which Jonson certainly shared. Jonson's great days began in 1603, for the new King was a pedant and therefore the courtiers were compelled to admire the ponderous Tragedies which began with *Sejanus.* He won renown too with his Masques, and the young writers looked on him as their chief, attracted by the fame of his learning and by the more amiable mood which came with success; but most of the spectators preferred Shakespeare's Tragedies, as Leonard Digges wrote in his Verses printed with Shakespeare's Poems in 1640,

> When some new day they would not brook a line
> Of tedious though well-laboured *Catiline*;
> *Sejanus* too was irksome.

This must have been the more bitter to Jonson because he looked on himself as the champion of the Laws of Drama, and he spoke his mind in *Volpone* and *Bartholomew Fair.*

Volpone was acted by his Majesty's Servants in 1605, but the dedication to the Two Universities was probably written later, perhaps in 1616. In it he wrote, "It is certain, nor can it with any forehead be opposed, that the too-much licence of Poetasters, in this time, hath much deformed their mistress, that every day their manifold and manifest ignorance doth stick unnatural reproaches upon her. . . . The increase of which lust in liberty, together with the present trade of the Stage, in all their misc'line Enterludes, what learned or liberal soul doth not already abhor? where nothing but the filth of the time is uttered, and that with such impropriety of phrase, such plenty of *solecisms*, such dearth of sense, so bold *prolepses*, such racked *metaphors*, with Brothelry, able to violate the ears of a pagan, and blasphemy to turn the blood of a Christian to water. . . . If my Muses be true to me, I shall raise the despised head of Poetry again, and stripping her out of those rotten and base rags wherewith the Times have adulterated her

form, restore her to her primitive habit, feature and majesty."

The Prologue to *Volpone* repeats the protest made in *Cynthia's Revels*, and it begins :

Now, luck yet send us, and a little wit
Will serve, to make our Play hit,
(According to the palates of the season)
Here is rhyme, not empty of reason :
This you were bid to credit, from our Poet,
Whose true scope, if you would know it,
In all his Poems, still, hath been this measure,
To mix profit, with your pleasure ;
And not as some (whose throats their envy failing)
Cry hoarsely, all he writes is railing :
And, when his Plays come forth, think they can flout them,
With saying, he was a year about them. . . .
Yet, thus much I can give you, as a token
Of his Plays' worth. No eggs are broken ;
Nor quaking custards with fierce teeth affrighted ;
Wherewith your rout are so delighted ;
Nor hales he in a gull, old ends reciting,
To stop gaps in his loose writing ;
With such a deal of monstrous and forced action :
As might make Bethlehem a faction :
Nor made he his Play, for jests stolen from each table,
But makes jests, to fit his fable,
And so presents quick *Comedy*, refined
As best Critics have designed,
The laws of time, place, persons, he observeth,
From no needful rule he swerveth.

Bartholomew Fair was acted in 1614 by the Lady Elizabeth's Servants, but it does not seem to have been printed before 1631, which is the date it bears in the Folio of 1641. In the Induction to it he tilted against some Master-Poet : Stage-keeper says, " And some writer (that I know) had had but the penning o' this matter, he would have made you such a jig-a-jogging in the booths, you should have thought an earthquake had been in the Fair ! But these Master-Poets, they will have their own absurd courses ; they will be informed of nothing ! He has (sir-reverence) kicked

me three or four times about the Tyring-house, I thank him, for but offering to put in, with my experience. . . . I am an Ass ! I, and yet I kept the Stage in Master Tarleton's time, I thank my stars. Ho ! and that man had lived to have played in *Bartholomew Fair*, you should have seen him have come in, and have been cosened in the Cloth-quarter, so finely. And Adams, the Rogue, had leaped and capered upon him. . . . And then a substantial Watch to have stolen in upon them, and taken them away, with mistaking words, as the fashion is, in the Stage-practice." And in the agreement which follows it is said : " He that will swear *Jeronimo* or *Andronicus* are the best Plays yet, shall pass unexcepted at here as a man whose judgment shows it is constant, and hath stood still these five and twenty or thirty years. Though it be an Ignorance, it is a virtuous and stayed Ignorance, and next to truth, a confirmed error does well ; such a one the *Author* knows where to find him. It is further covenanted, concluded and agreed, that however great the expectation be, no person here is to expect more than he knows, or better ware than a Fair will afford : neither to look back to the sword-and-buckler age of Smithfield, but content himself with the present. Instead of a little Davy, to take toll of the bawds, the Author doth promise a strutting Horse-courser, with a leer-drunkard, two or three to attend him, in as good equipage as you could wish. A wise Justice of the Peace meditant. . . . A sweet singer of new Ballads *allurant :* and as fresh an *Hypocrite* as ever was broached *rampant.* If there be never a Servant Monster in the Fair, who can help it ? he says ; nor a nest of *Antiques ?* He is loth to make Nature afraid in his *Plays*, like those that beget Tales, Tempests, and such like Drolleries, to mix his head with other men's heels ; let his concupiscence of Jigs and Dances reign as strong as it will amongst you : yet if the Puppets will please anybody, they shall be entreated to come in. In consideration of which, it is finally agreed, by the foresaid hearers and spectators that they neither in themself conceal, nor suffer by them to be concealed, any State-decipherer, or politic Picklock of the Scene, so solemnly ridiculous as to search out who was meant by the Ginger-bread Woman, who by the Hobby-horseman,

who by the Costard-monger, nay, who by their wares. Or that will pretend to affirm (on his own *inspired ignorance*) what Mirror of Magistrates is meant by the Justice, what great lady by the Pig-woman, what concealed Statesman by the Seller of Mousetraps, and so of the rest."

This Master-Poet who had kicked Jonson about the Tyring-house three or four times for offering to criticize him was not Marston or Dekker. Neither claimed to be a Master-Poet, and Marston had probably desisted from writing: the last Play known to be his, *What You Will*, was printed in 1607, for the *Insatiate Countess*, printed in 1613, may have been written by Barkstead. And neither of them clung to the antiquated ways of the Stage. It seems plain that the Master-Poet was

> Poor Poet-Ape that would be thought our chief,

and the description of him suits Shakespeare alone. If this Master-Poet who was still faithful to the ways of *Jeronimo* and *Titus Andronicus* and to the sword-and-buckler Drama of Smithfield (instead of obeying Jonson's Classical rules), and to the old Jigs and Dances and to the Stage-practice of the Watch with mistaking words was meant to be Shakespeare, this was probably Ben Jonson's last criticism of him while he was living. He may have meant to assert that nearly all Shakespeare's Tragedies sprang from *The Spanish Tragedy* and *Titus Andronicus*, which seems to be true.

This attack on the writer of Tales, Tempests and such-like Drolleries may be taken as showing that Jonson was said to have been depicted as Falstaff, for the three Plays in which Falstaff appeared and *Troilus and Cressida* seem the only ones in which he could have been kicked about the Tyring-house. The Treasurer's Accounts for May, 1613, prove that Heminge was paid for entertaining the Court with eighteen Plays, including *Sir John Falstaff*, *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest*. *Sir John Falstaff* may have been either the Comedy from *King Henry the Fourth* or *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. Perhaps the revival of it in 1613 led Jonson to quarrel with His Majesty's Servants and give *Bartholomew Fair* to the Lady Elizabeth's Servants. Such a quarrel seems indicated by the praise of the puppets

in the fifth Act of the Play: "Well, they are a civil Company. I like them for that; they offer not to fleer or jeer or break jests, as the great Players do; and then there goes not so much charge to the feasting of them or making them drunk as to the other." And a renewal of his quarrel with them might have led him to repeat the attack he made in *Cynthia's Revels.*

This was about the time of his adventure in Paris when young Ralegh exhibited him drunk in the streets, and he was aged about forty and had attained the huge size of which he was accustomed to boast; so the resemblance between him and the Knight must have been evident. This would help to explain why he protested that the spectators should not try to discover who was meant by the Gingerbread Woman or the rest of the Characters.

When Shakespeare was dead Jonson wrote a second tribute to him (or a judgment of him) in a tone of patronage fitting to the Lord of the Theatre. Its condescension is enough to suggest that these two were not friends. We cannot be certain when this judgment was written, for Jonson's *Timber or Discoveries made upon Men and Matter as they have flowed out of his daily Readings or had their reflux to his peculiar Notion of the Times* was merely (as its title explains) a collection of passages translated or borrowed from old books and applied to current affairs, and he may have compiled it from time to time during his leisure. But since he wrote of "the late Lord St. Albane" a few pages after he gave his peculiar Notion of Shakespeare, this was probably written after 1626. If he wrote this when his too-popular rival had been dead for ten years, and three years after paying a tardy homage to him in the Folio of 1623, it was natural that he should have tempered his blame with a profession of love which may have expressed a failing man's kinder memory of a former companion who had shown kindness to him when he was young.

In this little book, which was printed in 1641, after his death, he applied the elder Seneca's praise of Severus Cassius in his *Controversia* to "the late Lord St. Albane" and his judgment or censure of Quintus Haterius to Shakespeare, expanding both to point their effect, and this discounts

the worth of his testimony, for he may have been tempted to support his quotations. Of course, he remembered that Tacitus agreed with this judgment of Haterius and that the younger Seneca wrote in his fortieth Epistle: "nam Q. Haterii cursum, suis temporibus oratoris celeberrimi, longe abesse ab homine sano volo. . . . Summa ergo summarum hæc erit; tardiloquium te esse jubeo." The different censures of Haterius agreed that his profligate facility robbed him of his chance of renown, and this was the drift of Ben Jonson's final judgment of Shakespeare. In it he translated some of the elder Seneca's words; for instance, "In sua potestate habebat ingenium" and "sœpe incidebat in ea quæ derisum effugere non possent," and "Redimebat tamen vitia virtutibus, et persœpe plus habebat quod laudares quam cui ignosceres."

If his brief censure of Shakespeare is read with its context its meaning is evident. While he was judging his rival he was praising himself, as he did in his account of the True Artificer, and it may be that he had in his mind the passage in the *Annals* of Tacitus: "Eloquentiæ quoad vixit celebratæ: monumenta ingenii ejus haud perinde retinentur. Scilicet impetu magis quam cura vigebat. Utque aliorum meditatio et labor in posterum valescit; sic Haterii canorum illud et profluens, cum ipso simul extinctum est."

In the section he called *Censura de Poetis* he wrote: "Nothing in our age, I have observed, is more preposterous than the running judgments upon Poetry and Poets; when we shall hear those things commended, and cried up for the best writings, which a man would scarce vouchsafe to wrap any wholesome drug in; he would never light his Tobacco with them. And those men almost named for Miracles, who are yet so vile, that if a man should go about to examine and correct them, he must make all they have done but one blot. Their good is so entangled with their bad, as forcibly one must draw on the other's death with it. A Sponge dipped in Ink will do all:

Comitetur punica librum
Spongia
Et paulo post
Non possunt multa, una litura potest.

Yet their vices have not hurt them : nay, a great many they have profited, for they have been loved for nothing else. And this false opinion grows strong against the best men : if once it take root with the Ignorant. Cestius in his time was preferred to Cicero ; so far as the Ignorant durst. They learned him without book, and had him often in their mouths : but a man cannot imagine that thing so foolish or rude but will find and enjoy an Admirer, at least a Reader, or Spectator. The Puppets are seen now in despite of the Players : Heath's *Epigrams* and the *Skuller's Poems* have their applause. There are never wanting that dare prefer the worst Preachers, the worst Pleaders, the worst Poets : not that the better have left to write or speak better, but that they that hear them judge worse ; *non illi pejus dicunt, sed hi corruptius judicant.* Nay, if it were put to the question of the Water Rimer's works against Spenser's, I doubt not but they would find more suffrages ; because they most favour common vices, out of a prerogative the Vulgar have to lose their judgments and like that which is naught. . . .

"Indeed the Multitude commend Writers as they do Fencers or Wrestlers, who if they come in robustiously, and put for it with a deal of violence, are received for the braver fellows : when many times their own rudeness is the cause of their disgrace, and a slight touch of their Adversary gives all that boisterous force the foil. But in these things the unskilful are naturally deceived, and judging wholly by the bulk, think rude things greater than polished, and scattered more numerous than composed : Nor think this only to be true in the sordid Multitude but the neater sort of our Gallants : for all are the Multitude ; only they differ in clothes, not in judgment or understanding."

Then he continued with a marginal note *De Shakespeare nostrat :*

"I remember the Players have often mentioned it as an honour to Shakespeare, that in his writing (whatsoever he penned) he never blotted out line. My answer hath been, would he had blotted a thousand. Which they thought a malevolent speech. I had not told Posterity this, but for their ignorance, who choose that circumstance to commend their friend by, wherein he most faulted. And to justify

mine own candour (for I loved the man, and do honour his memory, (on this side Idolatry) as much as any). He was (indeed) honest and of an open and free nature : had an excellent Phantsie, brave notions, and gentle expressions : wherein he flowed with that facility, that sometimes it was necessary he should be stopped : *Sufflaminandus erat ;* as Augustus said of Haterius. His wit was in his own power ; would the rule of it had been so too. Many times he fell into those things, could not escape laughter : As when he said in the person of *Cæsar*, one speaking to him, *Cæsar, thou dost me wrong.* He replied : *Cæsar did never wrong, but with just cause :* and such-like, which were ridiculous. But he redeemed his vices with his virtues. There was ever more in him to be praised, than to be pardoned."

Ben Jonson may not have known that in the Folio of 1623 the reply which he condemned in *Discoveries* and echoed in the *Staple of News*, acted in 1625, was changed to

> Cæsar doth not wrong, nor without cause
> Will he be satisfied.

His last opinion of Shakespeare has much more in common with the rebukes he administered to an ignorant rival in *Cynthia's Revels*, the *Poetaster*, *Volpone* and *Bartholomew Fair* than with the Verses prefixed to the Folio of 1623. There is a personal note in it and perhaps he was thinking of other faults when he translated the elder Seneca's account of Haterius in the final words, " But he redeemed his vices with his virtues. There was ever more in him to be praised, than to be pardoned."