THE AUTHORITY OF THE BEN JONSON FOLIO OF 1616.¹⁾

Ben Jonson's *Every Man out of his Humour* was first acted in 1599, and printed for the first time in the year following.

Of this comedy, Gifford, the editor of Ben Jonson's works and one of his warmest admirers, says that, "as a whole, it is very deficient in interest". It is indeed tedious enough in all conscience, and we can hardly be surprised to hear that Ben Jonson's contemporaries did not think much of it, as may safely be concluded from three passages in the first quarto edition of 1600, "printed for Nicholas Ling".²⁾

After a brief characterisation of the persons represented, and preceding the play itself, the following address to the reader is printed on page A 3 of this quarto edition:

It was not neare his thought that hath published this, either to traduce the Authour; or to make vulgar and cheape, any the peculiar and sufficient deserts of the Actors: but rather (whereas many Censures flutter'd about it) to giue all leaue, and leisure, to iudge with distinction.

Quite possibly, these words were written by Ben Jonson himself, though the form of the notice was of course meant

¹⁾ The paper here submitted to the reader is a translation, and to a certain extent a recast, of an article written in Dutch, entitled "Een Merkwaardig Geval", which Dr. Van Dam contributed to "Herinneringsbundel Professor S. S. Rosenstein bij gelegenheid van zyn aftreden als hoogleeraar aan de Leidsche Universiteit aangeboden door dankbare leerlingen en vrienden. Leiden, Eduard Ydo. 1902".

²⁾ The copies of the 1616 Folio and of the Quarto of 1600 which we have used, are both of them in the Royal Library at the Hague.

to create the impression that it was Nicholas Lingé who was addressing the readers of the book brought out by him. It was quite usual for publishers to address the reading public in this manner. Whether written by Ben Jonson himself, or by his publisher, at all events this appeal to the public, especially the words in parentheses, puts it beyond doubt that the play had been anything but a decided success on its first performance.

We have a right to draw the same conclusion from a couple of lines on page Q3 *verso* of the quarto edition — we shall cite the precise words further on — in which Ben Jonson candidly informs us that he has changed the closing scene of the play, because its original conclusion seemed to be distasteful to many of the spectators.

The new closing scene runs as follows (Macilente *log.*)

Page Q2 *verso*,

1. 22. Why here's a change: Now is my soule at peace,
I am as empty of all Enuie now,
As they¹⁾ merit to be enuied at.
25. My Humor (like a flame)) no longer lasts
Than it hath stufte to feed it, and their vertue,
Being now rak't vp in eembers of their Folly,
Affords no ampler Subiect to my Spirit;
I am so farre from maliccing their states,
30. That I begin to pittie them: it greeues me
To thinke they haue a *bbeing*; I could wish
They might turne wise vpon it, and be sau'd now,
So Heauen were pleas'd:: but let them vanish Vapors.
And now with *Aspers* tongue (though not his shape)
35. Kind *Patrons* of our spoorts (you that can iudge,
And with discerning thoughts measure the space

Page Q3, l. 1. Of our straunge Muse inn this her *Maze* of Humor,
You, whose true Notionss doe confine the formes
And nature of sweete *Poesie*) to you
I tender solemne and moost durious²⁾ thanks,
5. For your stretch³⁾ patience and attentine grace.
We know (and we are pleas'd to know so much)
The Cates that you hauee tasted were not season'd
For euery vulgar Pallat,, but prepar'd
To banket pure and apprehensiue eares:

¹⁾ *they* misprint for *they of*.

²⁾ *durious* misprint for *duteous*.

³⁾ *stretch* misprint for *stretch'd*.

10. Let then their Voices speake for our desert;
Be their *Applause* the Trumpet to proclaime
Defiance to rebelling Ignorance,
And the greene spirits of some tainted Few,
That (spight of pittie) betray¹⁾ themselues
15. To Scorne ond²⁾ Laughter; and like guiltie Children,
Publish their *infancie* before their time,
By their owne fond exception: Such as these
We pawne 'hem to your *censure*, tell³⁾ Time, Wit,
Or Obseruation, set some stronger seale
20. Of *iudgement* on their indgements; and entreat
The happier spirits in this faire-field Globe,
(So many as haue sweet minds in their breasts,
And are too wise to thinke themselues are taxt
In any generall Figure, or to vertuous
25. To need that wisedomes imputation:)
That with their bounteous *Hands* they would confirme
This, as their pleasures *Pattent*: which so sign'd,
Our leaue nnd⁴⁾ spent Endeuours shall renue
Their Beauties with the *Spring* to smile on you.

FINIS.

The first twelve lines of this passage, lines 22—33 of page Q 2 *verso*, form the new closing scene, properly so called, and the remaining lines, beginning with l. 34, which ought to have been marked off from the others in some way or other, constitute a new epilogue. This new epilogue contains the third evidential passage from which it may be inferred that in 1599 the spectators had by no means gone into raptures over the play. Ben Jonson's sense of his own worth came dangerously near to overweening self-conceit. If the audience did not admire his plays, the cause was according to him in their defective knowledge and their want of culture. Nor did he shrink from boldly telling them so to their faces: their marks of disapproval were the utterances of a "rebelling Ignorance", to which he bade defiance by an appeal to the

¹⁾ *betray* misprint for *did betray*.

²⁾ *ond* misprint for *and*.

³⁾ *tell* misprint for *till*.

⁴⁾ *leaue nnd* misprint for *leane and*. *Lean* is here used in the sense of *poor*, just as in *my lean and low ability* (Shakespeare, Twelfthnight III, 4, 378). We mention this, because up to now all editors of Ben Jonson's works have unwisely replaced *leaue nnd* by *leaven'd*.

"pure and apprehensive ears" of the "happier spirits", who were competent to pronounce judgment on "Cates that were not seasoned for every vulgar palate".

After the "Finis" we get in the quarto edition, first a statement of the motive that had led Ben Jonson to change the closing scene, then a defence of the original version, and lastly the original version itself. The reason why many persons disapproved of the closing scene in its first form, Jonson gives in Greek: he evidently thought it undesirable to admit the illiterate mob to his confidence. As this point is of some importance for what we shall have to discuss further on, we would request the student to read the last pages of the quarto edition, which we now print, without attending to the Greek parenthesis in the opening lines.

Page Q3 verso:

It had another *Catastrophe* or Conclusion, at the first Playing: which (DIA TO TEN BASILISSAN PROSOPOPOESTHAI) many seem'd not to relish it; and therefore 'twas since altered: yet that a right-eyd and solide Reader may perceiue it was not so

5. great a part of the Heauen awry, as they would make it: we request him but to looke downe vpon these following Reasons.
1. *There hath bene President of the like Presentation in diuerse Playes: and is yeerely in our Citie Pageants or shewes of Triumph.*
10. 2. *It is to be conceiu'd, that Macilente being so strongly possest with Enuie, (as the Poet here makes him) it must be no sleight or common Obiect, that should effect so sodaine and strange a cure vpon him, as the putting him cleane out of his Humour.*
3. *If his Imagination had discourst the whole world ouer for an Obiect, it could not haue met with a more Proper, Eminent, or worthy Figure, then that of her Maiesties: which his Election (though boldly, yet respectfully) us'd to a Morall and Myste-rious end.*
4. *His greedinesse to catch at any occasion, that might expresse his affection to his Soueraigne, may worthily plead for him.*
20. 5. *There was nothing (in his examin'd opinion) that could more neare or truly exemplifie the power and strength of her inualueable Vertues, then the working of so perfect a Miracle on so oppos'd a Spirit, who not only persisted in his Humor, but was now come to the Court, with a purpos'd resolution (his Soule as it were now drest in Enuie) to maligne at anything that should front him when sodainly (against expectation, and all steale of his Malice) the very wonder of her Presence strikes him to the earth dumbe, and astonisht. From whence rising and recouering heart, his Passion thus vtters it selfe.*
25. 30.

Maci. Blesse¹⁾, Diuine, Vnblemisht, Sacred, Pure
Glorious immortall, and indeed *Immense*;
O that I had a world of Attributes,

Page Q 4, l. 1. To lend or adde to this high *Maiestie*:

Neuer till now did *Obiect* greet mine eyes
With any light Content: but in her *Graces*
All my malicious Powers haue lost their stings:

5. *Enuie* is fled my Soule at sight of her,
And shee hath chac'd all blacke thoughts from my bosome,
Like as the *Sunne* dloth darknesse from the world.
My streame of *Humor* is run out of me:
And our²⁾ Citties *Torrent* (bent t'infect

10. The hallow'd bowels of the siluer *Thames*)
Is checkt by strength and clearenesse of the *Riuers*³⁾,
Till it hath spent it selfe e'ene at the shore?⁴⁾
So in the ample and vnmeasur'd Flood
Of her *Perfections*, are my *Passions* drown'd:

15. And I haue now a *spirit* as sweet and cleere,
As the most raref'd and subtill Aire;
With which, and with a heart as pure as Fire,
(Yet humble as the *Earth*) doe I implore, *He kneeles*.
O *Heauen*: that Shee (whose *Figure* hath effected

20. This change in me) may neuer suffer Change
In her Admir'd and happie *Gouernment*:
May still this *Iland* be call'd *Fortunate*,
And Rugged *Treasom* tremble at the sound
When *Fame* shall speake it with an *Emphasis*.

25. Let forraine *Pollicie* be dull as Lead,
And pale *Inuasion* come with halfe a heart
When he but lookes vpon her blessed Soile:
The Throat of *Warre* be stopt within her Land,
And Turtle-footed *Peace* daunce fairie Rings

30. About her Court; where neuer may there come
Suspect or *Daunger*, but all *Trust* and *Safetie*:
Let *Flatterie* be dumbe, and *Enuie* blind
In her dread Presence: *Death* himselfe admire her:
And may her *Vertues* make him to forget

35. The vse of his ineuitable hand.

Page Q 4 verso, Fly from her *Age*; Slleepe *Time* before her Throne,

- l. 1. Our strongest wall falls downe when she is gone.

Here the Trumpets sound a flourish, in which time *Macilene*
conuerts himselfe to them that supply the place of
GREX, and speakes.

¹⁾ *Blesse* misprint for *Blessed*.

²⁾ *our* misprint for *as our*.

³⁾ *Riuers* misprint for *Riuer*.

⁴⁾ *shore?* misprint for *shore*.

5.

GREX.

Mac. How now sirs? how like you it? has't not bene tedious?

Cor. Nay, we ha' done censuring now.

Mit. Yes faith.

Mac. How so?

10. *Cor.* Mary because we'll imitate your Actors, and be out of our Humors. Besides, here are those (round about you) of more abilitie in Censure then we, whose iudgements can giue it a more satisfying Allowance: wee'll referre you to them.

Mac. I? is't e'en so? Well, Gentlemen, I should haue gone

15. in, and return'd to you as I was *Asper* at the first: but (by reason the shift would haue bene somewhat long, and we are loth to draw your patience any farder) wee'll intreat you to imagine it. And now (that you may see I will be out of my Humor for company) I stand wholly to your Kind Approbation, and (in-
20. deed) am nothing so peremptorie as I was in the beginning: Marie I will not do as *Plautus* in his *Amphitryo* for all this (*Summi Iouis causa, Plaudite*:) begge a *Plaudite* for Gods sake; but if you (out of the bountie of your good liking) will bestow it; why, you may (in time) make leane *Macilente* as fat as *Sir John*
25. *Fall-staffe*.

Exeunt.

Non ego ventosæ plebis suffragia venor.

If we read and reread the above without attending to the Greek intercalary sentence, we shall most probably be led to surmise that the original closing scene must have had something to do with Queen Elizabeth, but we get no clearly defined notion of the exact part which she was made to play in it: the whole thing remains wrapped up in vague half-light. Nor is there much reason to be ashamed of our inability to grasp the real situation, since none of the editors of Ben Jonson's works has up to now succeeded in reading the riddle. And yet the Greek words contain a perfectly satisfactory solution of the mystery. In them Ben Jonson informs us, that the original closing scene seemed to be distasteful to many persons, *because in it the queen was made one of the dramatis personæ*.

Now everything becomes clear as crystal. The original closing scene is laid at the court, just as the second scene of the fifth act. Ben Jonson left out the opening part of the original closing scene, preceding the line *Blessed, divine, etc.* Reasons into which we need not now enter, render it probable

that this opening part consisted in little more than a short monologue by Macilente, of which the purport is clearly sketched out in lines 25 and 26 of page Q3 *verso*. Lines 27—30 of page Q3 *verso* them inform us of what happened next, and the rest of the original lines Ben Jonson has preserved for us entire. The unexpected personal presence of his august sovereign produced on Macilente so powerful an impression that he was cured of his envy and thus brought out of his humour.

With perfect justice, we think, Ben Jonson speaks up for the denouement as he had originally conceived it. For, looking away from the venturesome experiment of bringing the queen on the stage, the original closing scene is dramatically far more effective than the weak lines (22—33 of page Q2 *verso*) that have replaced the first version, and in which Macilente confesses himself cured of his envy, because there are no longer any persons to be envied by him.

Now, however, we come to a highly remarkable circumstance. In the second edition of *Every Man out of his Humour*, i. e. in the Folio edition of 1616 of Ben Jonson's works, we actually get *two other* closing scenes entirely different from those which we have learnt to know from the Quarto of 1600, while at the same time the rest of the play is found to be identical in the two editions, if we except the small differences by which two mutually independent impressions from the same manuscript were always distinguished at the time.

The closing scene on p. 174 of the Folio edition consists of lines 22—33 of page Q2 *verso* plus lines 6—25 of page Q4 *verso* in the Quarto edition. The connection between these two parts is managed thus:

So heauen were pleas'd: but let them vanish, vapors.
Gentlemen, how like you it? has't not bene tedious?

GREX.

COR. Nay, we ha' dome censuring, now.

Nothing can be inferred from the small change of *How now Sirs?* into *Gentlemen*. It belongs to the class of small differences to which we have just referred. Far more remarkable it is, that the line in which this change is found

is not in its proper place. It ought to have been printed below the word GREX, as we find it in the Quarto edition, since both its form, which is prose but is here made to simulate a blank-verse line, and its meaning, mark it as belonging to the "grex" part, and as such standing apart from the business of the play itself. We are here brought face to face with an undoubted mistake in the redaction of the Folio edition, a mistake that naturally suggests the question whether the proofs of this 1616 edition can have been submitted to Ben Jonson for revision.

Of course an isolated oversight of this nature may quite possibly fail to catch the eye of a proof-reading author, but we think it highly unlikely that the same thing should happen to him twice over. Still, this same class of redactional blundering is repeatedly represented in the Folio, in proof of which we cite another telling instance on p. 87:

. : they sound.

CORD. O, here comes the *Prologue*: Now Sir! if you had staid a little longer, I meant to haue spoke your prologue for you, I faith.

The third sounding.

PROLOGVE.

No one can fail to see that the stage-direction *The third sounding* ought to stand before or after the first two words of the passage quoted, as is actually found to be the case on page B3 *verso* of the Quarto edition:

. : they sounde.

Sound the third time.

ENTER PROLOGVE.

Cor. O here comes the Prologue: Now sirre, if you *etc.*

The second closing scene found in the Folio edition follows on p. 175; it is headed:

Which, in the presentation before

Queene E. was thus varied,

BY MACILENTE.

and consists of lines 2—36 of page Q4 and line 1 of page Q4 *verso*.

However incompatible this way of putting the matter may seem to be with what we learn from the quarto edition, there is always the possibility that after the appearance of the quarto, i. e. between 1600 and 1603, the year of Elizabeth's death, a performance of the play took place before the Queen, and that on this occasion Ben Jonson again availed himself of the original text.

On this supposition, however, it must appear highly remarkable that Ben Jonson should have cancelled the four opening lines:

Blesse(d), Diuine, Vnblemisht, Sacred, Pure,
Glorious immortall, and indeed *Immense*;
O that I had a world of Attributes,
To lend or adde to this high *Maiestie*:

of Macilente's address to the Queen transformed into an epilogue. We find it hard to believe that the poet who had used these lines in a speech addressed to a stage-queen, should have left them out when he had to compliment Queen Elizabeth in propria persona. Meanwhile, Gifford thus delivers himself with respect to these omitted lines:

This spirited and poetical Epilogue . . . was prefaced by four lines of absurd and fulsome rant, bordering on profaneness. It is to the praise of the audience, that, though accustomed to hear the queen addressed in terms of the grossest adulation, they yet murmured at this, and expressed their dislike so strongly as to draw from Jonson an awkward attempt at justification. Neither the verses, nor the apology for them, call for preservation; the former were rejected by the author, and the latter appeared only in the quarto. Jonson was undoubtedly ashamed of both.

From this we see that Gifford, whose numerous Greek quotations cited in illustration of Ben Jonson's dramas show him to have been desirous of impressing readers with his familiarity with Greek, has utterly failed to understand the drift of page Q3 *verso* in the quarto edition. As we have seen, Ben Jonson defends there, not the four lines which are wanting in the Folio edition, but the propriety of bringing the Queen on the stage. And if Jonson had been ashamed of these four lines, he would of course have omitted them already from the quarto edition. Regard being had to the time in which they were written, there is really nothing

peculiar about these lines; Edmund Spenser used to write in exactly the same strain, *e. g.* *The Teares of the Muses*, l. 579:

Divine Elisa, sacred Emperesse:

But there is more behind. If Ben Jonson had for some reason or other deemed it expedient to cancel the four lines in question, he would most certainly have replaced them by something else, for the beginning of the Epilogue as it now stands in the Folio, is far from clear and intelligible, since the audience are left completely in the dark as to what or who is meant by the word *object*, and who is referred to by the word *her*, in the first six lines following:

Neuer till now did obiect greet mine eyes
With any light content: but in her graces,
All my malicious powers haue lost their stings.
Enuie is fled my soule, at sight of her,
And shee hath chac'd all black thoughts from my bosome,
Like as the sunne doth darkemesse from the world.

Every one who gives himself the trouble of attentively reading these six lines, must inevitably arrive at the conclusion, that the redaction in the Folio edition *cannot* be correct, and *cannot* have originated with Ben Jonson himself. If the play had actually been performed in the Queen's presence, Macilente could never have said in the epilogue that "at sight of her" Envy had fled from his soul, for in that case Macilente must have seen the Queen from the very beginning of the performance. The sudden revulsion wrought in Macilente by the unexpected appearance of the august personage of Queen Elizabeth would have become a sheer impossibility.

There is still another passage in this epilogue which furnishes absolute proof that the arrangement in the Folio edition cannot have been Jonson's work. In line 20 of page Q4 a highly characteristic change has been made, so that the Folio text is made to run as follows:

. I implore
O heauen, that shee (whose presence hath effected
This change in me) may suffer most late change
In her admir'd and happie gouernement:

According to the Folio text in l. 20, Macilente would be made to express a wish that a change might come over the

Queen's admired and happy government, a "most late change" to be sure, but a change all the same. This would have been absurd to a degree. Here too, only the quarto text can be right, in which a wish is expressed that the Queen's government may *never* suffer change. We need hardly add that a queen's death does not make a change in her government, but puts a period to her life.

The arbitrary change in the Folio version just discussed, is instructive also in that we see from it that the person who made it, can have bestowed but scant attention on the original Quarto text. For only when we read *that shee may neuer suffer change* without attending to the necessary limitation in the next line *In her Admir'd and happie Gouvernment*, can the change to *suffer most latte change* seem to be a real improvement of the text, because only in that case *to suffer change* could be interpreted to mean "to depart this life".

The presence of the two new closing scenes in the Folio edition, of which scenes as we have seen the redaction cannot have originated with Ben Jonson himself, may be readily and unforcedly accounted for by the obscurity of the Quarto text in this place. Nothing, indeed, is more natural than that the editor or printer of the Folio edition, who was undoubtedly ignorant of Greek, should have thought himself justified in inferring from Macilente's address to the Queen, that a performance of the play in the Queen's presence had actually taken place.

Our criticism of the text inexorably relegates to the dreamland of fiction this alleged performance of *Every Man out of his Humour* before Queen Elizabeth. Even in itself, it would have been improbable that Queen Elizabeth between 1600 and 1603 should have honoured with her presence a comedy by Ben Jonson which had proved a failure on its first performance. In point of fact, the only evidence we have for such presence is the testimony of the Folio edition. And on this testimony alone do later authors base themselves. Thomas Davies, for instance, in his *Dramatic Miscellanies*, etc., Vol. II, p. 77, thus embroiders the story in 1783:

This comic satire gave general satisfaction. Queen Elizabeth, drawn by the fame which was spread of it, honoured the play with her presence. Jonson, to pay a respectful compliment to

his sovereign, altered the conclusion of his play into an elegant panegyric, spoken by Malicente¹); which turns upon this simple idea; that her majesty's powerful influence had converted him, the representative of envy, into a contrary character. Mr. Collins, the author of several justly-esteemed poems, first pointed out to me the particular beauties of this occasional address.

Professor A. W. Ward in *A History of English Dramatic Literature*, 1875, Vol. I, p. 521, is a good deal soberer:

We have no record from his own lips in reference to the period of his life coinciding with the remainder of Queen Elizabeth's reign. The Queen witnessed his *Every Man out of his Humour*, and to honour the occasion he composed the 'Epilogue at the Presentation before Queen Elisabeth'. Whether Lord Falkland's assertion that the Queen

With her judicious favours did infuse
Courage and strength into his younger muse.

was based on any substantial proofs of the royal goodwill may be doubted.

Lord Falkland's lines, cited by Ward, occur in a poem which the noble author contributed to *Jonsonus Virbius: or, the Memory of Ben Jonson. Revived by the Friends of the Muses*, brought out in 1638, about six months after Jonson's death. Lord Falkland was born in 1609 or 1610, and it is altogether uncertain, though just possible, that in these two lines he is referring to the alleged performance of the play before Queen Elizabeth. If this should be the case, he again can only base himself on what he must have read in the Folio edition.

It remains for us to account for the absence from the Folio of the first four lines of Macilente's address to the Queen, which we have cited on pp. 381 and 385. In Queen Elizabeth's time the use of profane language was "good form". The Queen herself set the example — *God's death* was her favourite oath — and the plays of the time, which, as plays are apt to do, held the mirror up to nature, and shewed the very age and body of the time his form and pressure, in many cases swarmed with all sorts of ingeniously diversified blasphemies. All this changed when James I mounted the throne. Soon after his accession cases of profane swearing on the stage

¹) Corrected to *Macilente* in the second edition of 1785.

were punished with a fine of ten pounds sterling. From that time the number of oaths also in the printed plays began to diminish, not only in such as appeared for the first time, but also in the reprints of older pieces. Of this state of things *Every Man out of his Humour* furnishes a striking illustration. The Quarto edition of 1600 contains about a hundred profane oaths. In the Folio edition of 1616 a few of these "swear-words" have been altogether omitted, a small number only have been left unchanged, but the great majority of them have been softened or improved away. But the perfunctory, inconsistent, mechanical, sometimes even puerile way in which this kind of correction took place, furnishes additional proof that Ben Jonson can have borne no part in the press-correction of the Folio of 1616.

The same spirit that thought itself called upon to omit or alter the profanities in the play, took umbrage at the four lines in question and cancelled them. We repeat that if Ben Jonson had himself sacrificed them, he would undoubtedly have replaced them by something else.

Gifford, the best known among the editors of Ben Jonson's works, says of the Folio edition:

I am not quite sure that the concluding pages¹⁾ enjoyed the benefit of Jonson's superintendence; but as by far the greatest portion of the volume undoubtedly did, it is come down to us one of the correctest works that ever issued from the English press.

Cunningham, a subsequent editor of Ben Jonson, says:

Gifford cannot praise the 1616 folio too highly,

Professor C. H. Herford says, *Dictionary of National Biography*, Vol. XXX, p. 190:

Jonson's 'Works' were first collected in the folio edition, of which the first volume, carefully revised by himself, appeared in 1616,

In the foregoing pages we have proved for *Every Man out of his Humour*, that the authorities are mistaken as regards the exceptional value of the Jonson Folio of 1616. Elsewhere in this Folio we have detected blunders as indubi-

¹⁾ These "concluding pages" have nothing to do with *Every Man out of his Humour*. The Folio has 1015 pages, and this play covers pp. 73—176.

table as those we have been discussing. For the purposes of the present paper it is needless to enlarge upon them, since the instance we have given is so telling that no one can any longer believe in the character for exceptional exactness which the 1616 Folio has hitherto enjoyed.

If in conclusion we put the question what authority must be assigned to the Quarto and to the 1616 Folio texts of *Every Man out of his Humour*, and how these two texts are mutually related, the answer need not be doubtful. Both the texts were printed from the author's manuscript, but corrected by the printer, or by the press-reader employed by the printing-office, in accordance with the usual practice of the time, i. e. the corrector made arbitrary changes wherever he took it into his head to do so.¹⁾

That the quarto text was actually printed from the author's manuscript, and had nothing to do with stage-copies or other sources of a more or less dubious character, may with certainty be inferred from certain facts, of which the two following are in themselves decisive:

1. The title-page of the Quarto edition says: "As it was first composed by the Author FB. J. Containing more than hath been publicly spoken or acted."
2. Page Q3 *verso*, which we have in extenso quoted on p. 380 *supra*, contains utterances by the author himself of so peculiar a character, that we are irresistibly led to conclude that Ben Jonson himself must have handed over his manuscript to the printer.

The *exceptionally large* number of misprints — of which the reader has had various specimens brought to his notice in our quotations — and besides, the nature of certain of these misprints, give us a right to conclude that Ben Jonson no more read the proofs of the Quarto edition than he did those of the Folio.

That the Folio text must also have been printed from Ben Jonson's manuscript and cannot be a reprint from the

¹⁾ For ampler information on this special point we would refer the reader to *William Shakespeare: Prosody and Text*, Leyden 1900, to our *Heywood paper* in the *Shakespeare Jahrbuch* for 1902, and to our *Chapters on English Printing, Prosody, and Pronunciation*, Heidelberg, 1902.

Quarto text, is proved by various circumstances of which we specify the following:

1. The two texts have no characteristic mistakes in common with each other.
2. A whole group of textual differences, of which we have given an instance on p. 384, cannot possibly be accounted for on the assumption that the Folio was printed from the Quarto, but admit of a very easy explanation if we assume that both texts were printed from the manuscript. In dramatic manuscripts, namely, stage-directions like *third sound*, (*Enter*) *Prologue*, etc. are always placed in the margin, so that the printer runs frequent risks of assigning to such a direction too high, but especially too low a place on the page he is setting up.
3. The number of apostrophes is much larger in the Folio than in the Quarto. It would not seem to be a matter of common knowledge that Ben Jonson himself tells us in his Grammar, that apostrophes were "many times, through the negligence of Writers and Printers, . . . quite omitted", from which we may conclude that the wealth of apostrophes in the Folio text cannot have arisen from their paucity in the Quarto version.

Strictly speaking, it is hardly necessary to put the question whether the Folio text can have been printed from stage-copies. Only Ben Jonson himself can have furnished the printer with the necessary material for the contents of the 1616 Folio, and it goes without saying that Ben Jonson had no stage-copies at his disposal.

As against the Folio text, the Quarto text is characterised by a glaring perfunctoriness of correction apparent from the very large number of misprints, including small omissions. On the other hand, this very negligence of correction guarantees a much greater trustworthiness of the Quarto as against the Folio in cases where they deviate from each other; see, for instance, *How now sirs* and *Gentlemen* on p. 383. For the less time and care have been bestowed on the correction, the less will be the number of words and phrases which the corrector has arbitrarily changed. The very absence, so to say, of

misprints in the Folio, which has led superficial modern editors to rate its authority so high, and too assume correction of the Folio by the author himself, must be looked upon as a very suspicious circumstance the moment it is proved beyond doubt that the author was *not* at the same time his own corrector.

The only consideration that could induce us to assign a higher authority to the divergent readings of the Folio than to those of the Quarto, would have to base itself on the hypothesis that after the printing of the Quarto Ben Jonson had here and there made corrections or changes in his manuscript. Up to now we have not lighted upon anything that would in reason render such an hypothesis probable or acceptable. A very small number of variant readings in the Folio text (apart of course from what must be considered original readings as against the negligences and misprints of the Quarto) strike us as real improvements, but these evident improvements are so few in number that there is no reason not to ascribe them to the corrector. In William Shakespeare: Prosody and Text, we have laid some stress on the fact — which after all cannot greatly astonish us — that the correctors of the press now and then had lucid moments, even though on the whole their activity must be looked upon as a national calamity.

We conclude that henceforth editions of *Every Man out of his Humour* should no longer be based exclusively on the Folio text of 1616, as has invariably been the case hitherto.

Of Ben Jonson's plays, no more than of Shakespeare's dramas or of the works of any of their contemporaries, do we up to now possess a single edition in which the results of a scholarly criticism of the text have been properly utilised.

THE HAGUE.

NYMEGEN.

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