



The Works of Ben Jonson, Vol. 5 of 9 (Classic Reprint)

Ben Jonson

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A ss. This Comedy was acted in 1616, by the King s Servants at Blackfriars, but not put to the press till many years afterwards, when it appeared in the folio of 1631. The Editor of the Biograpkia Dramatica, who had but to open this volume to ascertain the true date, chooses rather to copy Langbaine, who is of no authority in this respect, and assign it to a later period. There is, indeed, another edition in folio, 1641, but it is of no authority, or even value, being full of errors. In noticing the date of Bartholomew Fair, I had occasion to observe that Jonson appeared to concern himself little, if at all, with the printing of the plays in the present collection ;and the Devil is an A ss, as well as the Staple of News, furnishes no slight proof of it. In the folio, 1616, which the author certainly revised, he is altogether sparing of his marginal directions, while the dramas just mentioned abound in them. They are, however, of the most trite and trifling nature ;they tell nothing that is not told in action, and generally in the same words, and are, upon the whole, such a worthless incumbrance on the page, that the reader will thank me for discarding them altogether. They bear no trace of the poets hand. This comedy was revived immediately after the Restoration, and, as Downes informs us, umuch to the satisfaction of the town. It originally appeared with this mottos from Horace :F icta voluptatis causd tint proyima veris.

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