

tion as the one in which Charles Dickens, Douglas Jerrold, John Leech, Mark Lemon, Gilbert à Beckett, and John Forster, made their successful *debut* before a refined and critical audience. Here is a brief account of the event: "The play was played on the 21st of September (1845), with a success that outran the wildest expectation, and turned our little enterprise into one of the sensations of the day. The applause of the theatre found so loud an echo in the press, that for a time nothing else was talked about in private circles; and after a week or two we had to yield to a demand for a more public performance in a larger theatre," &c., &c. Yet Mr. King asks us to believe that a play thus chosen on its own merits, and acted by a company of amateurs about 280 years after its original production, would have proved a dead failure at first, without the magnanimous exertions of Shakspeare:

(Quodcumque ostendis mihi sic, incredulus odi !

The following quotation will show our readers that Mr. King's contempt for Ben Jonson is not shared by recent critics. It is taken from p. 597, Part II., of *Some Recollections of a Reader*, published in the *Cornhill Magazine*: "The first perusal of *Every Man in his Humour* marks an epoch in a man's life. Brainworm and Bobadil and Master Stephen are realities, which, with other Jonsonian creations, score themselves ineffaceably into the memory. The costumes and the manners are, of course, in some respects, out of date. But human nature is human nature at all times, and the truth of these pictures is as patent to us now, and the humour is as fresh as ever, after a lapse of more than two centuries. I was, accordingly, not surprised to learn that one of the greatest humourists of the Victorian era had chosen the part of Bobadil, in which to demonstrate that he could act nearly as well as he could write; and that other pregnant wits of the day had taken part with him in the performance of rare Ben's great satire-in-action."

The whole story of Jonson's ingratitude to and envy of Shakspeare is a baseless fabrication. On a topic so important to the fair fame of the former we are induced to quote