

# THE SCRIBBLER.

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*Ubi plura nitent in carmine, non ego paucis  
Offendor maculis.*———HORACE.

Where many beauties shine, small faults are hid.

OF our old dramatic writers Ben Johnson has, by a kind of prescriptive right, derived from the suffrages of his contemporaries, obtained the place next after Shakespeare. I am inclined very much to doubt his title to so honourable a station, and can not but consider him as much inferior to Beaumont and Fletcher, and to Massinger. According to my own opinion therefore he can only claim rank as a fourth rate, and I have my doubts even whether some writers of his own age may not be found to dispute that station with him.

Of the dramatists just mentioned Philip Massinger always appeared to me to be entitled to the place next after Shakespeare; undoubtedly one of far inferior dignity, but still the nearest approaching to the proud elevation upon which Shakespeare's inimitable genius has fixed his fame. Hence, surprised that Massinger's works had not been found worthy of greater circulation than the unsatisfactory and barren editions of Coxeter and Mason could give them, it was a pleasing occupation of a considerable degree of leisure I enjoyed about fifteen years ago to minute a variety of observations, illustrations, and criticisms that offered themselves upon his plays as edited