

and Gifford have exposed the fallacy of such uncarranted imputations, and demonstrated beyond the possibility of future doubt that Jonson and Shakspeare were friends and associates—that no feud or jealousy ever disturbed their connexion—that Shakspeare was pleased with Jonson, and that Jonson loved and admired Shakspeare.”

The serious errors into which Mr. King has fallen seem attributable to the fact that he has blindly followed Mr.ione—“a laborious but dull commentator,” in the opinion of Hallam. The real question at issue is—Do Ben Jonson’s own writings furnish us with proofs that he was envious of Shakspeare’s fame and treated him with unkindness? Here are a few of his lines (from the First Folio of 1623) addressed “To the memory of my beloved, the author, Mr. William Shakspeare, and what he hath left us :”

“To draw no envy, Shakspeare, on thy name,
Am I thus ample to thy Booke and Fame :
While I confesse thy writings to be such
As neither Man nor Muse can praise too much.
’Tis true, and all men’s suffrage. * * * * *
* * * * * Soule of the Age,
The applause ! delight ! the wonder of our Stage !
My Shakspeare, rise. * * * * *
Triumph, my Britaine, thou hast one to shewe
To whom all Scenes of Europe homage owe.
He was not of an age, but for all time !
Sweet Swan of Avon !” &c.

The vision must indeed be distorted which can discover in this magnificent eulogy the faintest trace of envy or unkindness.*

Let us pass on to another of Mr. King’s facts. At p. 58, he tells us : “Alas ! Shakspeare had no desire for fame, that glorious immortality of true greatness.”

* Mr. King is strangely inconsistent. At p. 10 he speaks of “Rare Ben Jonson, who is *worthy of our love and respect*.” Soon, forgetting his own words, he wantonly traduces Ben’s character in two passages, and, finally—in reference to Judge Holmes and Shakspeare—declares that “it is wicked to assail the righteous memory of the dead.” We may with truth say : *Mutato nomine de te Fabula narratur*.