

was "Constitution." The Pope and his court at Rome are always described as politicians with no hint that spiritual motives played a part in their politics. Many French bishops were absentees since not only the abbeys but the bishoprics of France had become part of the governmental system. When a political statesman fell from power, the king could *banish* him by ordering him to fulfill the canonical requirement of residence in his diocese!

To our relief, our author occasionally mentions a model bishop who not only resided in his diocese but devoted his revenues entirely to his poor. On the other hand, his bugbear, Cardinal Dubois, was an absentee and pluralist and had no right to any ecclesiastical benefice whatsoever, if it entailed the holding of holy orders—because he was married! Dubois got some one to go down to a parish in the diocese of Limoges, distract the attention of the parish priest, and tear out from the parish register the page which contained the proofs of Dubois' marriage. So says Saint-Simon, confessedly no friend of Dubois.

Living at court, Saint-Simon brushed up against many persons who made history, some in big things, some in small. Had Voltaire died young, we might have known no more of him than what Saint-Simon tells us, namely that his name was Arouet, that he was the son of the Saint-Simon family notary, and that he was first exiled from the court for satirical and impudent verses and later sent to the Bastille for similar effrontery. It was an acquaintance of our author, the postmistress at Nonancourt, who saved the life of the Old Pretender when he was on his way to raise the Rebellion of 1715 in Scotland. She foiled the English agents who were out to kidnap him, if not murder him. What did she get in return? His portrait, says our informant, but she was never recompensed for out-of-pocket expenses. Well, royalty in exile can be very hard up indeed. As a matter of fact Saint-Simon tells us repeatedly about this Stuart, known to Jacobites like himself as James III, and shows him in a very pleasant light.

Saint-Simon's own career reached its apex when he was sent to Spain as ambassador-extraordinary to negotiate a proposed double marriage alliance between the children of Philip V and those of his relative the Regent of France. It was an imposition, rather than a pleasure, says Saint-Simon, and he only undertook it for the sake of certain promotions which shall be mentioned. Dubois tried to ruin him by making his duties as expensive as possible,

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The New Inn and Ben Jonson's "Dotage"

By CALVIN G. THAYER

BEN JONSON's last plays, *The Devil is an Ass*, *The Staple of News*, *The New Inn*, and *The Magnetic Lady*, were not well received by contemporary audiences, and although the last two were not only total failures at the time, they have apparently never been performed on the public stage since their first, catastrophic, presentations. For the 1631 edition of one of these, *The New Inn*, Jonson supplied a bitter, if amusing, title-page: "The New Inn, or The Light Heart, a Comedy. As it was never acted, but most negligently played by some, the King's Servants, and more squeamishly beheld and censured by others, the King's Subjects. 1629. Now, at last, set at liberty to the Readers, his Majesty's Servants, and Subjects, to be judged. 1631." Jonson's statement that his play was to be "judged" is both characteristic and revealing; he always insisted that the spectator or the reader should approach his work with judgment and intelligence, that he should understand before he praised or censured. Frequently we can enjoy, after a fashion, without understanding, but with Ben Jonson this is scarcely possible, so carefully premeditated is his work, and so carefully wrought.

Following their inauspicious first performances, the fates of these last plays seemed to have been sealed by Dryden's famous and highly unfortunate remark that they were his "dotages," for few critics have challenged it. *The New Inn* and *The Magnetic Lady* were produced during Jonson's last years. James I was dead, and courtly patronage, on which Jonson had earlier been able to rely, was gone. He himself was old and sick; he had suffered a paralytic stroke and was confined to his bed in a house depressingly shabby, and for nourishment he was apparently relying more and more exclusively on the Canary wine which had always been a staple of his diet. When these plays, then, very different from anything he had produced before, were presented to puzzled or indifferent audiences, they were taken, by

the charitably inclined, as the last feeble performances of a sick and tired poet.

L. C. Knights, however, in his fine book, *Drama and Society in the Age of Jonson*, has convincingly demonstrated the high quality of *The Devil is an Ass* and *The Staple of News*. Swinburne, the gustiest noise-making machine of nineteenth-century criticism, loudly defended *The Magnetic Lady* as one of Jonson's most perfect plays. But among modern students, only Freda L. Townsend, in *Apologie for Bartholmewe Fayre*, has seriously attempted a defense of *The New Inn*, and while her defense is salutary, it is by no means complete; and so, following Jonson's injunction to "understand," I should like to present a new and, I trust, accurate reading of this almost universally maligned and misunderstood play.

No one would be justified in seriously asserting that *The New Inn* is comparable to the great plays of Jonson's middle period, the period of those masterpieces, *Volpone*, *The Alchemist*, and *Bartholomew Fair*. *The Alchemist*, Jonson's greatest play, is, with respect to structure, vigor of language, serious intent displayed in comic terms, ingenuity of plot and situation, and fidelity to a clearly worked out theory of comedy, the greatest comic production in our language; there is nothing like it. But to say that a man, having once reached this height, is in his dotage because he did not reach it again, is to demand too much, even of Ben Jonson.

A summary of the action follows: The Lord Frampul married "Sylly's daughter of the South," whom he left, because of a "peccant humor," shortly after the birth of their second daughter. She, thinking he had gone because she had not borne him a son, left home also, resolving never to return until he should return. When he did return and found her gone, he immediately set out in quest of her, and neither of them had been heard from since, the estate remaining in the hands of the eldest daughter, Frances, Lady Frampul, "her young

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sister being lost." As the play opens, Lady Frampul, having heard of a famous new inn, goes there with some gentlemen and her chambermaid Prudence, for a day's diversion. Lovel, a melancholy guest at the inn, agrees to join the festivities. In the second act, Lady Frampul, uneasy because no other ladies are present, borrows Frank, the host's son, and dresses him as a lady, claiming him as a kinswoman, Mistress Letitia Syllly, all with the connivance of the boy's nurse, an old charwoman at the inn. The disguise is so successful that the young Lord Beaufort, a member of Lady Frampul's party, falls in love with him. In the meantime, a riotous crew assembles below stairs. It now develops that the main business of the day for Lady Frampul's party is to hold a court of love, under the authority of Pru, the chambermaid, who has been elected sovereign of the day. In the third act occurs the first sitting of the court, during which it is Lovel's duty to give a definition of love and a description of its effects. Lovel, we have learned, is in love with Lady Frampul, although she does not know it; and now, after his eloquent oration on love, she, it appears, is in love with him. At the beginning of act four, a noise below stairs indicates that a strange lady has arrived at the new inn, and has been rudely accosted by the merrymakers below. She is rescued by Lovel, whereupon it is discovered that she is in fact no lady, but one Pinnacia Stuff, wife to Nick Stuff, Lady Frampul's tailor, and that she is wearing a new suit which had been ordered for Pru but not delivered. The tailor himself appears, dressed as a footman, and we learn that the tailor's wife "was wont to be pre-occupied in all his customers' best clothes, by the footman, her husband. They are both condemned and censured, she stript like a doxy and sent home afoot." After this interruption, the second sitting of the court of love occurs, and Lovel delivers an oration on valor, his reward for which is a kiss from Lady Frampul, as it had been also after the first oration. Lovel,

afraid, and unable, to declare his love, retires in acute melancholy to his room in the inn. In the fifth act, Fly brings word that the Lord Beaufort has been secretly married in the stable to the host's son, disguised as Mistress Letitia Syllly. The host, in anticipation of Beaufort's discomfiture, sends Pru for Lovel, to whom the impossible marriage is disclosed and the story seconded by Beaufort's friend Lord Latimer. Beaufort and his bride enter, but when Beaufort calls for his bed to be made, the host reveals the identity of his new wife. During Beaufort's confusion, the old nurse enters and reveals that the boy Frank is really Mistress Letitia Frampul, daughter to Lord Frampul and sister to Lady Frances Frampul, and that she herself is the girl's mother. The host then reveals that he is the missing Lord Frampul. Thus Lord Frampul is reconciled with his wife, both of them with their children, Beaufort with his wife, and Lovel with his, since Lord Frampul bestows his daughter Frances on him. Pru is taken by Lord Latimer, "for the crown of her virtue and goodness, and all are contented." A "new" inn indeed.

THE CRITICS have almost universally commented on the absurdity of this plot. Castelain objects strongly to the improbability of the situation and to the absurdity of holding a court of love in a Jacobean inn. But we must remember that equally improbable plots have aroused relatively less opposition—consider Beaumont and Fletcher, for example, or, for that matter, Shakespeare's late tragi-comedies; and, as for the absurdity of holding a court of love in an inn, we can only say that if such a court is to be held at all, it might as well be in an inn as any other place. If the plot is absurd, it is no more so than are the plots of dozens of other Elizabethan and Jacobean comedies. In fact, however, what clearly stands out in this plot, as Jonson presents it, is its symbolic nature. If we take it as the realistic representation of a possible action we are of course bound to object, but if we take it as the symbolic representation of an idea, we may proceed rather easily to an examination of what Jonson was doing.

The theme of *The New Inn* is, with certain important variations, the theme also of the great tragicomedies of Shakespeare—*Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale*, *The Tempest*, *Pericles*—the theme of reconciliation, and, like those Shakespearean masterpieces, Jonson's play is deeply moral, with the practitioners of folly changed, corrected, and happily reconciled.

Like all of Jonson's comedies, *The New Inn* has a social purpose which is part of,

and inseparable from, its moral purpose. As everyone knows, the court of love game was one of the most popular sports at the court of Charles I and Henrietta Maria, but, in this courtly context, the Platonic implications of Renaissance courtly love were frequently perverted, so that while the exalted, spiritual, ennobling aspects of love were the matter of courtly debate, the actual practice was somewhat closer to that which one might find in a high-class brothel. For this view we have the evidence of innumerable contemporary satires on "Platonick" lovers who give verbal expression to the aspirations of their souls, but who then realize these aspirations in the bedchamber or on the back stairs. Jonson has his court of love conducted above stairs in the new inn, and Lovel's speeches on love and valor stress particularly the moral values of those emotions. As a result of these speeches, Lady Frampul (Frampul means peevish or erratic) is made to see the folly of her ways and is brought to an awareness of the exalted nature of true love. It should be said, however, that Lady Frampul's folly is an external folly, a folly of manner rather than of conviction, so that what Lovel's speeches actually do is simply to restore a balance and a sanity, to cause Lady Frampul to realize her moral and spiritual potentialities. Jonson, then, is setting an example for his courtly audience.

WHILE THE COURT of love is conducted above stairs in the new inn, below stairs a riotous crew consisting of Sir Glorious Tiptoe, Fly, Peirce Anon, the drawer, Jordan, the chamberlain, Jug, the tapster, Bartholomew Burst, "a broken citizen," Hodge Huffle, and others, is getting uproariously drunk and displaying a truly spectacular degree of ignorance and inebriate hilarity, with an alarming propensity for atrocious puns rather in the manner of Shakespeare's clowns. These people quite clearly are the indifferent of the world, the earthbound who keep the world wagging but who have neither the interest nor the capability to concern themselves with matters of the spirit. Through this clearly constructed duality Jonson seems not only to be pointing out the obvious contrast but also to be saying, in effect, that without some attention to these matters we would all be happy cousins of Caliban. In addition, the themes of love and valor, appropriately modified, are introduced in these below-stairs scenes, valor in an altercation between Sir Glorious Tiptoe and Hodge Huffle, and love, when Sir Glorious accosts Pinnacia Stuff as she enters the inn dressed as a lady, and again in the peculiar relationship between Pinnacia and her unfortunate husband. Love and

valor, to which perhaps more than lip-service was paid at court, are thus idealized in Lovel's speeches and brutalized, amusingly enough, in the words and actions of Sir Glorious and his comrades.

We must now consider the significance of the inn itself, the stage on which these dramas are enacted. At the very beginning of the play the host gives us a clue when he tells us that the inn is called The Light Heart. And then, in Act I, scene 3, explaining to the melancholy Lovel why a gentleman keeps an inn, he speaks as follows:

If I be honest, and that all the cheat
Be of myself, in keeping this Light
Heart,
Where I imagine all the world's a play,
The state and men's affairs all passages
Of life, to spring new scenes, come in,
go out,
And shift and vanish; and if I have got
A seat, to sit at ease here i' mine inn,
To see the comedy, and laugh and chuck
At the variety and throng of humors
And dispositions that come justling in
And out still, as they one drove hence
another,
Why will you envy me my happiness?

The inn, then, is a theatre, and the play therein enacted is nothing less than the world, than life itself. The idea of the theatre as a stage, and the drama as life, was a commonplace among Elizabethan and Jacobean playwrights and is, in fact, as old as Cicero. Thomas Heywood argues in his *Apology for Actors* that the drama represents a panorama of life and that from observing the drama one may make certain conclusions about his own life as well, and this idea is implicit in almost innumerable metaphoric statements of the drama as life. It is clear, then, that if the inn in Jonson's play is a stage, this stage may be reasonably assumed to be, metaphorically, the world, life, so that in the inn is enacted a comedy which offers moral commentary, in symbolic terms, on some aspect of life. Through observing the flow of life in and out of the inn, Lord Frampul, alias the host, and Lady Frances Frampul, his daughter, lose their peevish affectations. Lord Frampul's wife, née Syllly, posing as the old nurse, loses, alas, her silliness, and Frank, the host's son, posing as Mistress Letitia Syllly, but being really Mistress Letitia Frampul, becomes Lady Beaufort. Lovel is retrieved from his desperate melancholy, and Pru the chambermaid, playing the rôle of sovereign of the festivities in the inn, is indeed a sovereign, as she displays her tact, discretion, humor, and good sense, and becomes Lady Latimer. Sir Glorious Tiptoe and his comrades, and Nick Stuff and his charming wife

Pinnacia also play their rôles, in that the absurdity of their words and actions provide, consistent with the Aristotelian precept, that version of the ludicrous which is a subject of laughter, and which, as Dennis was to say later, ought never to be imitated in life. They are observed by the other characters in the play and provide, in comic terms, moral instruction, as they do also for the *other* audience, in the theatre.

All of this is, in fact, not unlike what happens in *The Tempest*; we have a play the action of which is symbolic; we have the theme of reconciliation; we have characters undergoing metamorphoses as a result of their experiences or observations; we have "low" characters who provide both laughter and moral instruction; and we have a particular locale which serves metaphorically as a stage representing the world. In Shakespeare's play we have his best verse, technically, his crowning achievement; in Jonson's play we have not his best verse, but at least a verse remarkably appropriate to his theme, a verse at once fluid and musical, inferior to Shakespeare's, it must be said, but much more than merely serviceable. Still, though, Shakespeare and Jonson are doing different things. Shakespeare, setting his scene on the enchanted island, peopling it with vaguely supernatural characters, and decorating it with magic, is closer to traditional ideas of pastoral, and, by establishing with every means at his disposal an aesthetic distance between the "real" world and the world of the play, makes it much easier to perceive the symbolic nature of his play. Jonson had no affection for magic islands as scenes for comedy (the masque was another matter), and chose the familiar, rather than the strange, an inn near London rather than a non-existent magic island, a host rather than a Prospero, a charming Pru rather than a celestial Miranda. Parts of *The Tempest* are sheer magic; *The New Inn* is a work of great skill and intelligence. Jonson, in his entire conception, was almost certainly influenced by *The Tempest*, but, as always, he chose to write his own play in his own way. By most critical standards, Shakespeare's play is better, just as many of Jonson's own plays are better, but *The New Inn* is an excellent comedy, expertly plotted, admirably constructed, abounding in interesting and entertaining characters, with a serious purpose which yet is communicated in a comic context. When we reflect that it is no *Alchemist*, we should also reflect that *The Tempest* isn't, either.

of the tubercles instead of in the axils. Among the thirty-seven genera are the curious dumpling cactus, peyote (*Lophophora*) which produces a narcotic; the living rock (*Ariocarpus fissuratus*) of Western Texas and Mexico; the cone cactus (*Encephalocarpus*) the tubercles of which have the form of cone scales; and the agave cactus (*Leuchtenbergia*), the tubercles of which resemble the leaves of a miniature century plant. There are several species of *Astrophytum* which are commonly found in collections. One of them is the Bishop's cap cactus (*A. myriostigma*) which has no spines but has five star-like ribs and is covered with silvery scales. Of the entire group, only one species, *Homaloccephala texensis*, occurs in Oklahoma and it is reported only from Harmon County. This rather large, flat cactus has heavy spines and produces large magenta flowers about the first of May. It is locally known as the devil's pincushion.

MEMBERS OF THE turk's cap group (*Cactanae*) are found in many places in South America. A few species occur in Mexico, but the best known localities are in the West Indies. They are among the very first cacti to be brought to the Old World. They look like small to intermediate sized barrel cacti with a red or orange fez on top. The curious red cap is only the modified upper part of the stem which serves for the production of flowers and fruits. The structure is known as a cephalium and it is far more conspicuous and colorful than are the flowers and fruits. Both of the latter resemble those of the mammillarias. Although there are two genera in the sub-tribe, only one, *Melocactus*, is abundant and well-known. The plants are prized as ornamentals in tropical countries.

The mammillaria or pincushion group (*Coryphanthanae*) includes about sixteen genera of small cacti many of which are popular as house plants. The group was originally segregated from other cacti on the basis of having separate spine-bearing and flower-bearing areoles. The spine areoles crown the tubercles and the flowers appear in the axils of the tubercles. Developmental studies, however, have shown that these conditions do not hold for all genera and it is likely that the group will soon be reclassified. Oklahoma has several species each of the genera *Coryphantha* and *Neobesseyia*. The first has purplish red flowers; the second, yellowish bronze. In