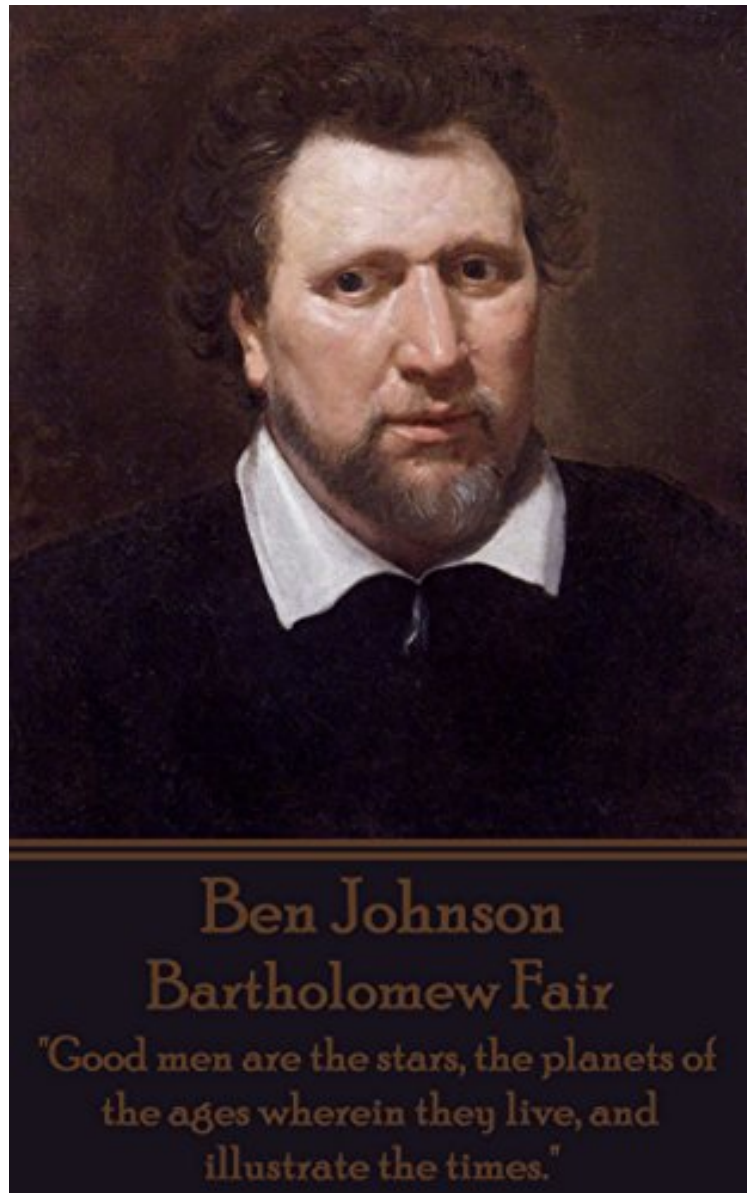


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Bartholomew Fair: "Good men are the stars, the planets of the ages wherein they live, and illustrate the times."

Ben Jonson

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Benjamin "Ben" Jonson was born in June, 1572. A contemporary of William Shakespeare, he is best known for his satirical plays; *Volpone*, *The Alchemist*, and *Bartholomew Fair*, and his equally accomplished lyric poems. A man of vast reading and a seemingly insatiable appetite for controversy, including time in jail and a penchant for switching faiths, Jonson had an unparalleled breadth of influence on Jacobean and Caroline playwrights and poets. In 1616 Jonson was appointed by King James I to receive a yearly pension of pound;60 to become what is recognised as the first official Poet Laureate. He died on the 6th of August, 1637 at Westminster and is buried in the north aisle of the nave at Westminster Abbey. A master of both playwriting and poetry his reputation continues to endure and reach a new audience with each succeeding generation.