struck with so sure a hand and with such depth and intensity of tone, in the early tragedies.

But in addition to her constant influence and example the poet was probably indebted to his mother for certain ele­ments of his own mind and character directly inherited from her. This position may be maintained without accepting the vague and comparatively empty dictum that Shakespeare derived his genius from his mother, as many eminent men are loosely said to have done. The sacred gift of genius has ever been, and perhaps always will be, inexplicable. No analysis, however complete, of the forces acting on the individual mind can avail to extract this vital secret. The elements of race, country, parentage, and education, though all powerful factors in its development, fail ade­quately to account for the mystery involved in pre-eminent poetical genius. Like the unseen wind from heaven it bloweth where it listeth, and the inspired voice is gladly heard of men, but none can tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth. while, however, genius is thus without ancestry or lineage, there are elements of character and qualities of mind that, like the features of the countenance and the lines of the bodily frame, appear to be clearly transmissible from parent to child. Shakespeare not unfrequently recognizes this general truth, especially in relation to moral qualities ; and it is mainly qualities of this kind that he himself appears to have inherited from his gently born and nurtured mother, Mary Arden of the Asbies. At least it is hardly fanciful to say that in the life and character of the poet we may trace ele­ments of higher feeling and conduct derived from the hereditary culture and courtesy, the social insight and refinement, of the Ardens. Amongst such elements may be reckoned his strong sense of independence and self- respect, his delicate feeling of honour, his habitual con­sideration for others, and, above all perhaps, his deep instinctive regard for all family interests and relationships, for everything indeed connected with family character and position. The two epithets which those who knew Shakespeare personally most habitually applied to him appear to embody some of these characteristics. They unite in describing him as “gentle” and “honest” in character, and of an open and free, a frank and generous disposition. The epithet “gentle ” may be taken to repre­sent the innate courtesy, the delicate consideration for the feelings of others, which belongs in a marked degree to the best representatives of gentle birth, although happily it is by no means confined to them. The second epithet, “honest,” which in the usage of the time meant honourable, may be taken to express the high spirit of independence and self-respect which carefully respects the just claims and rights of others. One point of the truest gentle breeding, which, if not inherited from his mother, must have been derived from her teaching and example, is the cardinal maxim, which Shakespeare seems to have faith­fully observed, as to nice exactness in money matters— the maxim not lightly to incur pecuniary obligations, and if incurred to meet them with scrupulous precision and punctuality. This he could not have learnt from his father, who, though an honest man enough, was too eager and careless to be very particular on the point. Indeed, carelessness in money matters seems rather to have belonged to the Snitterfield family, the poet’s uncle Henry having been often in the courts for debt, and, as we have seen, this was true of his father also. But, while his father was often prosecuted for debt, no trace of any such action against the poet himself, for any amount however small, has been discovered. He sued others for money due to him and at times for sums comparatively small, but he never appears as a debtor himself. Indeed, his whole life contradicts the supposition that he would ever

have rendered himself liable to such a humiliation. The family troubles must have very early developed and strengthened the high feeling of honour on this vital point he had inherited. He must obviously have taken to heart the lesson his father’s imprudence could hardly fail to impress on a mind so capacious and reflective. John Shakespeare was no doubt a warm-hearted lovable man, who would carry the sympathy and affection of his family with him through all his troubles, but his eldest son, who early understood the secret springs as well as the open issues of life, must have realized vividly the rock on which their domestic prosperity had been wrecked, and before he left home he had evidently formed an invincible resolution to avoid it at all hazards. This helps to explain what has often excited surprise in relation to his future career—his business' industry, financial skill, and steady progress to what may be called worldly success. Few things are more remarkable in Shakespeare’s personal history than the resolute spirit of independence he seems to have displayed from the moment he left his straitened household to seek his fortunes in the world to the time when he returned to live at Stratford as a man of wealth and position in the town. While many of his fellow dramatists were spendthrifts, in constant difficulties, lead­ing disorderly lives, and sinking into unhonoured graves, he must have husbanded his early resources with a rare amount of quiet firmness and self-control. Chettle’s testi­mony as to Shakespeare’s character and standing during his first years in London is decisive on this head. Having published a posthumous work by Greene, in which Mar­lowe and Shakespeare were somewhat sharply referred to, Chettle expressed his regret in a preface to a work of his own issued a few months later, in December 1592 ; he intimates that at the time of publishing Greene’s *Groats- worth of Wit* he knew neither Marlowe nor Shakespeare, and that he does not care to become acquainted with the former. But having made Shakespeare’s acquaintance in the interval he expresses his regret that ho should, even as editor, have published a word to his disparage­ment, adding this remarkable testimony : “ Because myself have seen his demeanour, no less civil than he excellent in the qualities he professes ; besides, divers of worship have reported his uprightness of dealing, which argues his honesty, and his facetious grace in writing, which approves his art.” So that Shakespeare, during his earliest and most anxious years in London, had not only kept himself out of debt and difficulty, but had estab­lished a reputation of strictly honourable conduct, “ divers of worship,” *i.e.,* men of position and authority entitled to speak on such a point, “ having reported his upright­ness of dealing, which argued his honesty.” Now, consider­ing the poet’s associates, occupations, and surround­ings, this is significant testimony, and conclusively proves that, although fond of social life and its enjoyments, and without a touch of harshness or severity in his temper, he yet held himself thoroughly in hand, that amidst the ocean of new experiences and desires on which he was suddenly launched he never abandoned the helm, never lost command over his course, never sacrificed the larger interests of the future to the clamorous or excessive demands of the hour. And this no doubt indicates the direction in which he was most indebted to his mother. From his father he might have derived ambitious desires, energetic impulses, and an excitable temper capable of rushing to the verge of passionate excess, but, if so, it is clear that he inherited from his mother the firmness of nerve and fibre as well as the ethical strength required for regulating these violent and explosive elements. If he received as a paternal heritage a very tempest and whirl­wind of passion, the maternal gift of temperance and