his brother Henry; and in 1592 his name was included in a list of recusants dwelling at or near Stratford-on-Avon, with a note by the commissioners that in his case the cause was believed to be the fear of process for debt. There is no reason to doubt this explanation, or to seek a religious motive in John Shakespeare’s abstinence from church. William Shakespeare’s purse must have made a considerable difference. The prosecutions for debt ceased, and in 1597 a fresh action was brought in Chancery for the recovery of Asbies from the Lamberts. Like the last, it seems to have been without result. Another step was taken to secure the dignity of the family by an application in the course of 1596 to the heralds for the confirmation of a coat of arms said to have been granted to John Shakespeare while he was bailiff of Stratford.

The bearings were *or* on a bend *sable* a spear *or* steeled *argent,* the crest a falcon his wings displayed *argent* supporting a spear *or* steeled *argent,* and the motto *Non sαnz droict.* The grant was duly made, and in 1599 there was a further application for leave to impale the arms of Arden, in right of Shakespeare’s mother. No use, however, of the Arden arms by the Shake­speares can be traced. In 1597 Shakespeare made an important purchase for £60 of the house and gardens of New Place in Chapel Street. This was one of the largest houses in Stratford, and its acquisition an obvious triumph for the ex-poacher. Presum­ably John Shakespeare ended his days in peace. A visitor to his shop remembered him as “ a merry-cheekt old man ” always ready to crack a jest with his son. He died in 1601, and his wife in 1608, and the Henley Street houses passed to Shakespeare. Aubrey records that he paid annual visits to Stratford, and there is evidence that he kept in touch with the life of the place. The correspondence of his neighbours, the Quineys, in 1598 contains an application to him for a Ioan to Richard Quiney upon a visit to London, and a discussion of possible investments for him in the neighbourhood of Stratford. In 1602 he took, at a rent of 2s. 6d. a year, a copyhold cottage in Chapel Lane, perhaps for the use of his gardener. In the same year he invested £320 in the purchase of an estate consisting of 107 acres in the open fields of Old Stratford, together with a farm-house, garden and orchard, 20 acres of pasture and common rights; and in 1605 he spent another £440 in the outstanding term of a lease of certain great tithes in Stratford parish, which brought in an income of about £60 a year.

Meanwhile London remained his headquarters. Here Malone thought that he had evidence, now lost, of his residence in South­wark as early as 1596, and as late as 1608. It is known that payments of subsidy were due from him for 1597 and 1598 in the parish of St Helen’s, Bishops- gate, and that an arrear was ultimately collected in the liberty of the Clink. He had no doubt migrated from Bishopsgate when the Globe upon Bankside was opened by the Chamberlain’s men. There is evidence that in 1604 he “ lay,” temporarily or permanently, in the house of Christopher Mountjoy, a tire-maker of French extraction, at the corner of Silver Street and Monkwell Street in Cripplegate. A recently recovered note by Aubrey, if it really refers to Shakespeare (which is not quite certain), is of value as throwing light not only upon his abode, but upon his personality. Aubrey seems to have derived it from William Beeston the actor, and through him from John Lacy, an actor of the king’s company. It is as follows: “ The more to be admired q[uod] he was not a company-keeper, lived in Shoreditch, would not be debauched, & if invited to court, he was in paine.” Against this testimony to the correctness of Shakespeare’s morals are to be placed an anecdote of a green-room amour picked up by a Middle Temple student in 1602 and a Restoration scandal which made him the father by the hostess of the Crown Inn at Oxford, where he baited on his visits to Stratford, of Sir William Davenant, who was born in February 1606. His credit at court is implied by Ben Jonson’s references to his flights “ that so did take Eliza and our James,” and by stories of the courtesies which passed between him and Elizabeth while he was playing a kingly part in her presence, of the origin of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* in

her desire to see Falstaff in love, and of an autograph letter written to honour him by King James. It was noticed with some surprise by Henry Chettle that his “ honied muse ’’dropped no “ sable tear ” to celebrate the death of the queen. South­ampton’s patronage may have introduced him to the brilliant circle that gathered round the earl of Essex, but there is no reason to suppose that he or his company were held personally responsible for the performance of *Richard II.* at the command of some of the followers of Essex as a prelude to the disastrous rising of February 1601. The editors of the First Folio speak also of favours received by the author in his lifetime from William Herbert, earl of Pembroke, and his brother Philip Herbert, earl of Montgomery.

He appears to have been on cordial terms with his fellows of the stage. One of them, Augustine Phillips, left him a small legacy in 1605, and in his own will he paid a similar compliment to Richard Burbage, and to John Heminge and Henry Condell, who afterwards edited his plays. His relations with Ben Jonson, whom he is said by Rowe to have introduced to the world as a playwright, have been much canvassed. Jests are preserved which, even if apocryphal, indicate considerable intimacy between the two. This is not inconsistent with occasional passages of arms. The anonymous author of *The Return from Parnassus* (2nd part; 1602), for example, makes Kemρe, the actor, allude to a “ purge ” which Shakespeare gave Jonson, in return for his attack on some of his rivals in *The Poetaster.@@1* It has been conjectured that this purge was the description of Ajax and his humours in *Troilus and Cressidα.* Jonson, on the other hand, who was criticism incarnate, did not spare Shakespeare either in his prologues or in his private conversation. He told Drummond of Hawthomden that “ Shakspeer wanted arte.” But the verses which he con­tributed to the First Folio are generous enough to make all amends, and in his *Discoveries* (pub. 1641; written c. 1624 and later), while regretting Shakespeare’s excessive facility and the fact that he often “ fell into those things, could not escape laughter,” he declares him to have been “ honest and of an open and free nature,” and says that, for his own part, “ I lov’d the man and do honour his memory (on this side idolatry) as much as any.” According to the memoranda-book (1661-1663) of the Rev. John Ward (who became vicar of Stratford in 1662), Jonson and Michael Drayton, himself a Warwickshire poet, had been drinking with Shakespeare when he caught the fever of which he died; and Thomas Fuller (1608-1661), whose *Worthies* was published in 1662, gives an imaginative description of the wit combats, of which many took place between the two mighty contemporaries.

Óf Shakespeare’s literary reputation during his lifetime there is ample evidence. He is probably neither the “ Willy ” of Spenser’s *Tears of the Muses,* nor the “ Aetion ” of his *Colin Clout’s Come Home Again.* But from the time of the publication of *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece* honorific allusions to his work both as poet and dramatist, and often to himself by name, come thick and fast from writers of every kind and degree. Perhaps the most interesting of these from the biographical point of view are those contained in the *Palladis Tamia,* a kind of literary handbook published by Francis Meres in 1598; for Meres not only extols him as “ the most excellent in both kinds *[Le.* comedy and tragedy] for the stage,” and one of “ the most passionate among us to bewaile and bemoane the perplexities of Love,” but also takes the trouble to give a list of twelve plays already written, which serves as a starting-point for all modern attempts at a chronological arrangement of his work. It is moreover from Meres that we first hear of “ his sugred Sonnets among his private friends.” Two of these sonnets were printed in 1599

@@@1 Kempe (speaking to Burbage), “ Few of the university pen plays well. They smell too much of that writer Ovid and that writer *(sic)* Metamorphosis, and talk too much of Proserpina and Jupiter. Why here’s our fellow Shakespeare puts them all down ; aye, and Ben Jonson too. O that Ben Jonson is a pestilent fellow. He brought up Horace giving the Poets a pill, but our fellow Shakespeare hath given him a purge that made him beray his credit.”