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BIRTHPLACE
AND
ADJOINING
PROPERTIES.

BY
JOS. HILL.

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PREFACE.

The following pages have recently appeared in the columns of the *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald*, and the difficulty attendant upon writing a paper of this kind in weekly divisions may, perhaps, be accepted as an excuse for some of its shortcomings. With the knowledge that the contribution of any facts, however small, bearing upon the connection of William Shakespeare's family with Stratford-upon-Avon is always warmly welcomed, I am not disposed to offer special apologies which otherwise would be necessary.

With the object of stringing together a variety of information not generally accessible, I have been enabled to draw upon original documents and other reliable sources, freely borrowing from the great storehouse of Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps and from documents most courteously placed at my disposal by Mr. C. E. Flower. I have also had kindly help from Mr. Savage, the Librarian of the Birthplace.

JOS. HILL.

Perry Barr,
November, 1885.

Description of the Plan.

- A. Land upon which in the year 1590 stood a tenement held by the Corporation of Stratford-upon-Avon, subject to an annual Chief Rent to the Lord of the Manor of three pence.
- B. Ditto, ditto, tenement held by John Ichivar, subject to ditto, ditto. . . . of twelve pence.
- C. Ditto, ditto, tenement held by George Badger, subject to ditto, ditto of ten pence.
- D. Ditto, ditto, tenement held by John Shakespere, subject to ditto, ditto . . of thirteen pence.
- E. Ditto, ditto, tenement held by the same John (Shakespere) subject to ditto, ditto of six pence.
- F. Ditto, ditto, tenement held by John (Edward) Wylles, subject to ditto, ditto . . of eight pence.
- G. Ditto, ditto, tenement held by Richard Hornsbye, subject to ditto, ditto . . of five pence.
- H. Ditto, ditto, tenement held by Corporation of Stratford-upon-Avon, subject to ditto, ditto of three pence.

B Passed to the Johnsons and Eldertons and C to the Horns, and both to Payton, who leased a part of A, and purchased portions of D, the whole being amalgamated as the White Lion Hotel. F and G passed to Thomas Nash, but were afterwards sold separately, F being now included in the Birthplace Garden.

- No. 1. The ancient Gateway entrance from the Guild-pits to the White Lion Inn yard.
- No. 2. Position of the strip of Land sold by John Shakespeare to George Badger in January, 1597.
- No. 3. Suggested site of Shakespeare's Barn described in 1694 as standing on the "backside" near the White Lion.
- No. 4. The ancient Gateway entrance from the Guild-pits to the Swan Inn yard.
- No. 5. Probable site of another barn, sold 1771, described in 1730 as in the Guild-pits adjoining to

IV.

the back gates belonging to the Swan Inn. Subsequently it was described as near the Maidenhead gates.

- No. 6. Land behind the Cottages sold to Payton.
No. 7. Cottages sold to Payton, with the western-most end of the Birthplace.
No. 8. The ancient Gateway entrance from the Guildpits to John Shakespeare's premises, afterwards the Swan and Maidenhead yard.
Nos. 9 & 10. The seventeen feet square piece and the "backside" piece, eleven yards long, sold by John Shakespeare to Willies about 1598.
Nos. 11 & 12. Custodian's Cottage and kitchen belonging thereto.

The site of the White Lion shoeing-forge was probably, but not certainly, opposite the Inn gates, and the plan generally, although compiled from authoritative sources, is nevertheless offered as conjectural only in some particulars.

ERRATA—Page 2, King's Norton 1573 read 1575; and for Robert read Edmund Hall; Page 14, for Stratford read London Court of Requests; Page 20, for fifteen read eleven yards; Page 32, for six read five other tenements.

THE BIRTHPLACE AND ADJOINING PROPERTIES.

The great antiquity of Henley-street is due to the fact that it was a deviation from the King's highway as it neared Stratford, towards the Market Cross. The main road towards London was over common or waste land, called the Guyldpits, probably from an old custom or right of the inhabitants to dig soil or gravel. This shorter cut to the Market Cross caused dwellings to be set up as early as the 14th century, and the highway or Guyldpits became a back road, yet retained the great width which under the statute of Winchester, 1285, would be lawful. The whole of the land in the Guildpits and a considerable portion on Henley-street seems to have belonged to one or other of the early Guilds, eventually amalgamated with the Guild of the Holy Cross. At the time of the dissolution of the Guild there were many houses in the street, held by various owners, all apparently free tenements, subject to small ancient rents to the Lord of the Manor. These houses in most cases were detached, and had considerable plots of land appurtenant. The manor itself changed hands immediately after the seizure of the Guild possessions to the Crown, the Duke of Northumberland acquiring it, and Ambrose, Earl of Warwick, being afterwards the lord. Among the free tenants at or immediately after this date were Thomas Grevill, of Charingworth, gentleman, Edward West, William Wedgwood, Edmund Hall.

A tenement the next but one to the Maiden Head end of the Birthplace on the east side was sold by Grevill to Richard Hornbye, blacksmith. The land behind and the two tenements adjoining between Hornbye's house and the Birthplace belonged to William Wedgwood, who sold the land

to Hornbye in 1573, and the two tenements to Edward Wyllies, yeoman, of King's Norton, 1573. The next house, part of the Birthplace, was sold by Edward West to John Shakespeare, 1556. The adjoining house, being the remaining part of the Birthplace house, with the garden, was sold by Robert Hall and wife to John Shakespeare (1574). The house further west (the Swan, afterwards the White Lyon) was owned by Badger, and the next one by John Ichivar, sold in 1591 to Robert Johnson. Six houses are thus shown to have been free tenant holdings, the premises at either end being Corporation, doubtless, formerly, Guild land.

Formerly it was accepted that John Shakespeare bought the whole of the Birthplace house in 1574 of Edmund and Emma Hall for £40. Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps, however, in the recently-issued fifth edition of his "Outlines of the Life of Shakespeare," gives the results of his great researches respecting the Birthplace, and throws new light on the subject, identifying the separate character of the two tenements forming the Birthplace, with many interesting particulars relating to each. For convenience of identity, he designates the house bought of West in 1556 the Wool Shop—the warehouse of John Shakespear, the "considerable dealer in wool," afterwards the Maiden Head, and the portion bought of Hall (1574) as the dwelling-house of the family, the real Birthplace, afterwards the butcher's shop.

The ancient title deeds of the properties of Wedgwood, Hornby, and Willies, which came into my possession twenty years since, and are now in the Birthplace, have never been publicly treated in detail, yet contain matter of considerable Shakespearean interest. In December, 1852, the late J. Payne Collier communicated to the Society of Antiquaries in London some extracts from the old records of the Court of Requests, which were printed in the 35th Vol. of that Society's Reports, 1853. These extracts related to a suit, 1639, of Mr. Allen Wastell, of Walsall (? Saltley), against Thomas Willis, of King's Norton, to recover a small piece of land, 17 fots square, fronting Henley-street, pur-

chased, together with a little backside piece, about forty years before, by his ancestor, Edward Willis, of one Shakespeare, and which had been used to enable Willis to pull down the two small houses and build one house in their place, which house he called the Bell.

The title-deeds I have before referred to give satisfactory explanations of this litigation, but it will be more convenient to deal first with the eastern tenement, or Richard Hornby's house.

The family of Hornby was one of long continuance in Stratford. In 1573, Richard was a substantial smith living in his own freehold burgage in Henley-street, and on the 23rd of August in that year he purchased of William Wedgwood, of Stretford-uppon-Avon, yeoma, the piece of land behind his tenement in Henley-street, extending from one poste, being now the mownd of William, unto the Queen's Highway, comonly called the Gillpittes, in breadth ten poles and a half, towards the forsaid Gillpitte, between the land of the said William Wedgwood on the west part and the land of the said Richard Hornbye on the southe part, the land of the town of Stretford on the east pte; and the Queen's highway, called the Gillepitte, on the north pte.

Wedgwood covenants to mentayn and keepe halfe the moundes from his own howse towards the sayd Gillpitte at his own cost and charge, and Hornby to kepe and mentayn the other half unto the sayd Gillpitte. The witnesses are Gualtern Roether, John Shaxper, Roger Green, and John Auge. The seal used upon this deed is W S., entwined with a true-lover's knot, so similar to that upon Shakespeare's ring seal as to suggest its being an impression from it. Comparison, however, has shown that it is a trifle smaller, and clearly not impressed from it. The deed and seal, together with an electro-type impression, are deposited in the Birthplace. A comparison may, therefore, be readily made.

The name of Walter Roether is of great importance. The deed was his preparation, and shows that if he had then given up his office of Master at the Guild School he was practising as a lawyer, and he as

called in John Shakespeare, and used his seal, and also similarly obtained his aid in another conveyance from Wedgwood two years later, it suggests more than mere accident. If he had been the schoolmaster of Shakespeare's son William, of which scarcely a doubt can exist, may he not also have had the legal training of his pupil—the imparting to him of the law Latin and legal phrases of which he was such a proficient. Was he not, in short, the man who made Shakespeare a sound lawyer? and would it not be a possibility that Francis Collins, the Warwick lawyer, friend, and executor of Shakespeare, was also a pupil of Walter Rocher? In the 1st part of Henry IV., Act 3, Scene 3, is a remarkable reference to a lost ring seal, and in the second part of Henry VI., Act 4, Scene 1, is a peculiar play upon the words Walter, Gualtier, and Water.

As Shakespeare was but little past 30 when these lines were written, they have a value as reflecting early impressions on his mind. That the seal used upon this deed was the property of John Shakespeare can scarcely admit of a doubt, and that the seal ring found at Stratford in 1810, now in the Birthplace Museum, and fully described in R. B. Wheler's History of Stratford, was an exact copy of the seal so used is absolutely undeniable.

The ring is accepted (and I think properly) as Shakespeare's. It follows, therefore, that this earlier seal, identical in almost every minute particular, used by Shakespeare's father in August, 1573 (when William's age was only nine), strongly suggests its having belonged to one of the family, although the name of John Shakespeare's father being Richard altogether precludes the possibility of it being actually the seal ring of his grandfather.

Falstaff.—Shall I not take mine ease in mine inn, but I shall have my pocket pick'd? I have lost a ring seal of my grandfather's, worth forty mark.

Host.—I have heard the Prince tell him, I know not how oft, that that ring was copped.

* * * * *

Falstaff: Wilt thou believe me, Hal? Three or four bonds of forty pounds a-piece and a seal ring of my grandfather's.

Prince Henry: A trifle, some eighteen penny matter.

Again, might he not have his old master, who was so fond of writing his name Gualter, in mind when he penned—

Suffolk : Thy name affrights me, in whose sound is death.

A cunning man did calculate my birth,
And told me that by *Water* I should die,
Yet let not this make thee be bloody-minded.
Thy name is Gualtier, being rightly sounded.

Whitmore-Gualtier, or *Walters*, which it is I care not.

In the year 1603 Richard Hornbye, the blacksmith, still occupied, with his wife Anne and a younger son Francis, his free tenement in Henley-street upon the site now occupied by the houses nearest to the garden of the Birthplace, the custodian's cottage occupying a site partially behind. On the 1st of January in that year a lease for 21 years was made to Francis by his father and mother, reserving permission for their occupying so long as they should live that part of the premises then occupied by them, and afterwards to pay to his eldest brother Thomas 30s yearly. This lease was witnessed by George Perrye and Francis Collyns.

Francis Collyns was the solicitor preparing the deed. What is the inference? That as Rocher before acted as lawyer for Hornbye, Collyns was continuing his practice in Stratford. It is known that Collyns was a Stratford man born; as the friend, lawyer, and executor of William Shakespeare, Collyns's early connection with Stratford might fairly be assumed; and here is not only strong evidence of the fact, but presumptively of his continuance of the practice of Shakespeare's old master, Walter Rocher. It would be of considerable interest to learn when Collyns first practised in Warwick, it being, of course, possible that he did business in both towns.

Richard Hornbye died before 1612, as in the Bill of Complaint respecting the Stratford tithes Thomas Horneby is set down as the owner of the messuage wherein he now dwelleth of the yearly value of £3 10s. In 1614, April, Thomas Horneby, of Stratford-upon-Avon, blacksmith, sold to Thomas Jelffe, of Welcombe, Old Stratford, yeoman, for £24, all that messuage, with the appurtes purchased

by Richard Horneby, deceased, his father, of one Thomas Grevill, of Charnyworth,* in the countie of Glouc., gent., and William Wedgwood, of Stratford aforesaid, yeoman, situate in Henley-street, between the towneland of Stratford aforesaid, called the Guyld land, sometime in the occupation of one William Wilson, of the east part, the King's high waye, called the Guild Pitt, on the north part, the land now or late of Thomas Bragden on the north and west parte, and the street, called Henley-street, on the south parte, and are now in the tenure, use, and occupation of Frauncys Horneby, brother of the said Thomas, to be held of the cheefe lorde or lords of the fee by the rent and services, &c., with a warranty of title against Thomas Horneby and Joane, his nowe wife, Frauncis Hornbye, Richard Hornbye, Thomas Grevill, and William Wedgwood. The seal has a stag's head crest, and the witnesses are Francys Hornbye, J. Greene, Mychaell Johnsonn, Humfrye Hiccox, and William Twining.

In this case Greene is undoubtedly the lawyer. He was one of the cozens of William Shakespeare, whose grandmother will yet probably prove the connecting link, as Robert Arden's first wife. Michael Johnson, the other witness, was a neighbour and acquaintance of William Shakespeare. His name will have to be mentioned hereafter, as also that of Hiccox.

Six years later, March, 1620, Thomas Jelfe sold the property to Thomas Nasse, of Lyncolne's Inne, in Middlesex, gentleman, for the increased price of three score pounds. The description need not be repeated, being similar to the preceding, with the exception of the additional words "and all howses, buyldinge, shoppes, sellers, yarde, backsyde roomes, &c.," and that the town land was in the occupation of one Thomas Greene, and the premises, now the Birthplace garden, as late of Thomas Bragden, and now in the occupation of Thomas Rumney. The

* Parish of Ebberton, near Chipping Campden. The Grevills held the manor, one Lewis Grevill possessing it 1st Elizabeth.

witnesses are George Nashe, Anthony Wither, William Cox, and John Nashe. Possession and delivery of seizin was given in the presence of Jos. Greene, Thomas Greene, and Richard Waring, the Green's being, of course, the cousins of Shakespeare.

Thomas Nashe, who six years afterwards married Shakespeare's grand-daughter, was only 26 when he made this purchase. He afterwards acquired the property between Hornbys' and the Birthplace. The subsequent dealings with both properties may therefore be taken together. This adjoining property, being two old houses, the site whereof is now comprised in the garden of the Birthplace, previous to the year 1575 belonged to William Wedgwood, who had already sold to Horneby the land behind his house, having a frontage of nearly 58 yards to the Guildpits, a measurement giving but a small clue to the shape of the land. The boundary lines are of an eccentric character, mostly at right angles with the Guildpits rather than Henley-street, whilst the site of the Misses Chattaway's cottage, although apparently upon Horneby's land, seems from some of the descriptions to have been excluded. It must also be remembered that the ancient "King's Highway," the Guildpits, was in Shakespeare's day considerably wider than now.

By indenture made the 20th September, 1575, in the xvijth yere of the raigne of our Sovereigne Lady Elizabeth, by the grace of God, &c., between William Wedgewood, of Stretford-uppon-Avon, in the county of Warr, Tailer (*sic*) th' on' pty, and Edward Willies, of the pshe of Kyng's Norton, in the county of Woro, yeoma, of the other pty, William Wedgwood sold for the some of forty fower poundes all those his twoe tenements or burgage lying together and being in Stretford aforesaid, in a street there commonly called Henley Streete, wch now are in the use, occupation, and possession of the said Willia' Wedgwood, betwyne the tent. of Richard Hornbye on the east part, and the tenement of John Shakesp', yeoma', on the west pte, and the streete aforesaid on the sowthe pt', and the Quene's high way, called the Gillpitt, on the

north pte, together with all gardens, edyfices, &c., &c., to the sayd tow tenemts or burgage belonging or in anywise now appertaynyng to hold to Edward Willis and his heirs, without condition of mortgage or redemption, to be holden of the chief lord of the fee, &c., &c. In witness whereof the pties above-named to these present indentures interchangeable have putte their hands and seales, even the day and year fyrst above wryten. Signed, Wylliam Wedgwood, and witnessed by John Shakespr, Edward Affyeld, Humfrey Affyeld, Bartholomew Kyth, Richard Horneby, p. me Gualtern Roher, Scriptore.

The covenants of title run of and from all and all manner of former bargens sales titles leases yoyn- ters dowers uses wills intayles rent charges rent seek arrareges of rents recognysaunces statutes marchant and of staple wrytinges obligatory judgements executions condemperations issues fynes ameremens intrusyons forfaytures alienations without lycence and of and from all other charges encomberaunces and demands whatsoever.

Compare this with the following :—

Hamlet.—There's another. Why may not that be the skull of a lawyer. Where be his quiddities now ; his quillites, his cases, his tenurs, and his tricks ? Why does he suffer this madde knave now to knock him about the sconce with a durtie shovell, and will not tell him of his action of battery. Hum ; this fellow might be in's time a great buyer of land with his status, his recognisances, his fines, his double vouchers, his recoueries, to have his fine pate full of fine durt. Will vouchers vouch him no more of his purchases and doubles than the length and breadth of a payre of indentures ? The very conueyances of his lands will scarcely lye in this box, and must the inheritor himselfe haue no more, ha.—*Hamlet*, 1604 edition, Graveyard scene.

One is tempted to think that Walter Roher, the Stratford scrivener's manner, was admirably copied.

Wedgwood's name to the deed is signed by him.

The witnesses' names are all written by Roher, and the "John Shakesp'" is identical with the form of the name in the body of the deed. The two Affyelds belonged to an old yeoman family of King's Norton. Richard Horneby was, of course, the blacksmith and adjoining owner.

It should not be overlooked that William Wedgwood, designated a yeoman in 1578, is in this deed called a tailor, and having the use, occupation, and possession of the premises, he was the next door neighbour of John Shakespeare, certainly until William had reached the age of eleven. The forge and smithy of Richard Horneby, the prosperous and long-continuing blacksmith, being next door to Wedgwood.

John Shakespeare was the principal witness on the completion of each sale by Wedgwood, perhaps accompanied by his son, the legal formalities being carried out by the master of his son's school. An intimacy would exist between the bright lad of "neighbour Shakespeare" and the tailor and smith, whose shop and smithy would be most familiar to him. Can we doubt, therefore, that when, in writing "King John," one of his early works, he makes Arthur ask—

Must you with hot irons burn out both mine eyes ?

And, further on,

Ah ! none but in this iron age would do it !

The iron itself, though heat red hot,

Approaching near these eyes would drink my tears.

Horneby's forge and smithy would again stand before his eyes, and in the remarkably vivid picture he has drawn of Hubert's recital to the King immediately following.

Hubert : Old men and beldames in the streets
Do prophesy upon it dangerously.

Young Arthur's death is common in their mouths,

And when they talk of him they shake their heads

And whisper one another in the ear ;

And he that speaks doth gripe the hearer's wrist,

Whilst he that hears makes fearful action

With wrinkled brows, with nods, with rolling eyes.

I saw a smith stand with his hammer thus—

The whilst his iron did on the anvil cool

With open mouth swallowing a tailor's news,

Who with his shears and measure in his hand,

Standing on slippers (which his nimble haste

Had falsely thrust upon contrary feet)

Told, &c.

King John, Act 4, Scene 2.

Were not Horneby and Wedgwood re-enacting some well-remembered scenes of his early days, nay

even the selection of his similies in continuance—"Here is your hand and seal for what I did," and "Shall this hand and seal witness against us," may perchance have been prompted by some reminiscence connected with these old neighbours.

The purchaser of the two old tenements, Edward Willies, the King's Norton yeoman, must have been moved by some strong feeling of affection for the town of Stratford. Not only did he, during the whole of his life, retain this property, a distance of more than 20 miles from his home, from whence he would have to travel over Weatheroak Hill, past Gorgot Ullenhall and Wootton Wawen, but finding, in 1598 or 1599, it was advisable to re-build, and being restricted for space owing to John Shakespeare's land abutting into his, he agreed with the Stratford glover and wool-dealer for the purchase of a peculiarly-shaped piece of land which adjoined Shakespeare's wool warehouse in order to build a substantial house, which was used as a tavern, and was always after called the Bell.

The conveyance from Shakespeare, which would assuredly be made with the consent of his wife and eldest son, is not to be found. Forty years later the land conveyed by it was the subject of much litigation, but the deed itself was never specially set forth.

In July, 1609, Willies, who appears to have had no children, conveyed it to two friends, Thomas Osborne, of Hampsteede, county of Stafford, yeoman, and Bartholomewe Austyne, of Norfeilde, county of Worcester, yeoman, in trust after his own death for his kinsman Edward Willies, of Honsworth (Handsworth), nailor, and if no children to Thomas Willies, of Honsworth, brother of Edward.

The description of the Bell from the mention of William Shakespeare is of interest:—All that messuage, or tenement, or burgage, with appurts, called the bell, otherwise the signe of the bell, heretofore used or occupied in twoe tenements scituate and being in Stratford-upon-Avon, in the county of Warwick, in a streete there comonlie called henley streete, and now or late in the tenure or occupation of Roberte Brookes, or his assignes or

under-tenants, between the tenements of Thomas Hornbie on the east parte and the tenements late* Willm Shakspeare on the weaste parte, and the street aforesaid on the southe parte, and the Kinge's heighe waye, called the gillpitts, on the northe parte; together with all gardens edifices howses barnes stables, &c., &c. The witnesses are Thomas Leighe (apparently the lawyer), William Kyleoppe, William Walton, and John Kendricke. Kyleoppe was a well-known Birmingham man, living, as did also the Kendricke's, at Bordesley, Aston. The others, however, are unknown to me.

The Willies' were a numerous family, probably of the Stratford stock. They settled in King's Norton, Handsworth, Birmingham, Aston, &c.

Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps has printed this deed in full, and called attention to the interlineation of the word "late," remarking that the exact meaning of the passage deserves careful investigation. The interpretation may be that the deed was written in King's Norton or Birmingham, and on the 5th August following the parties to the deed proceeded to Stratford to deliver possession (as was then requisite) to the feoffees; that finding Shakespeare's house was no longer occupied by one of the name, for John Shakespeare had been dead eight years and his wife one year, and that the part theretofore the store-house for wool was converted, the simple interlineation was adopted in preference to the longer one, which would have been necessary under the customary rule of adding the name of the actual occupier of that part of the premises adjacent, which, as Mr. Halliwell Phillipps pretty conclusively shows, must then have become an inn.

It would appear by the above deed that the whole of the Bell Inn, as occupied by Robert Brookes, was granted in favour of his cousins; yet two years later, 1st April, 1611, Edward Wyllys, of Kynge's Norton, yeoman, granted and enfeoffed William Wastell, of Aston, in the County of Warr; and Edward Wyllys, of Handesworthe, in trust for his kynseman, Symon Wastell, of Aston, cuttler, in consideration of the love he bore to him, of the land

which twelve years before he had bought from John Shakespeare, and upon which part of the new house, the Bell, stood. The following is the precise description of the land severed from John Shakespear's property, from which it remained separate for two centuries and a half, but now again forms part of the Birthplace estate. "All that platt of ground conteyninge seventeen foots square, that is to say seventene footes every way, with all and singular the edifices and buyldinges thereupon, latelie erected and buylded, soituat, lienge, and beinge in Stretford-uppon-Avon, in the county of Warr, in a streete there commonlie called Henley Street, betwixt the freeholde of one John Shakespere on the west syde and the freeholde of the aforesayd Edward Wyllys on the east side, together also with one little backside thereunto belonginge, conteyninge in length from the sayd platt of ground on the west side eighte yards and on the east side aleven yards and a haulfe and in breadth at the upper end tewardes the platt of ground latelie buylded uppon seventeen footes, and at the nether end towards the Gilpittes two yards and a haulfe.

This deed was also prepared in the neighbourhood of Birmingham, and the witnesses' names appended are Edward Heath and Francis Fyeld. The scrivener who prepared it would have the conveyance from John Shakespeare to work upon, and the description is to a certainty a verbatim copy of that in Shakespeare's conveyance, which deed would be likely to pass at once into the hands of Symon Wastall.

In January and December of 1613 Edward Willies signed two other deeds to the same effect and with same descriptions, giving the respective properties to the same persons, all of whom he terms coosons, without, however, the intervention of trustees. Both were prepared and witnessed by persons residing near Birmingham, and it illustrates the persistent carelessness with which old descriptions were retained when it is seen that late William Shakespeare is repeated in the case of the Bell, and late John Shakespeare in that of the small piece of land.

It will be noticed in the deed of 1614 from Horneby to Jelffe that the Bell is described as land late of (not as occupied by) Thomas Bragden, and on the 24th April, 1615, Alice Bragden, of Stratforde-upon-Avon, widowe, late wife of Thomas Bragden aforesaid, woollen draper, deceased, in consideration of £50, released to Edward Wyllies, of King's Norton, and Edwarde Willyes, of honsworth, nailor, all her estate, right, tytell, and interest of dower, in two mesuages or tenements, and all houses, barns, &c., &c., and seituat and being in Stratforde-upon-Avon in a streete there commonlie called Henley Streete, and usually called by the name of the Bell, otherwise the signe of the Bell, and now in the tenure or occupation of Thomas Romney, &c. This is witnessed by Richard Brookes, perhaps a son of Robert, the former tenant, Thomas Willis, and Thomas Chauders. It is of interest as being prepared in Stratford, and contains a new description written upon the spot. Whether she was the relict of Edward Willyes, the original purchaser, in which case the then Edward, of King's Norton, would be her son or stepson, and that Bragden was her second husband, is not material. It shows, however, that during William Shakespeare's last years the Bragdens were, in Stratford, the reputed owners of the property adjoining his Henley-street house.

For twelvemonths, therefore, before the death of William Shakespeare the property on the east side of his Henley-street property was in the occupation of Romney, whilst the owner, Willyes, had by deeds arranged for its division at his death, the Bell going to the Willyes' of Handsworth and the land purchased from John Shakespeare to the Wastells of Saltley. His death, however, probably did not take place for 20 years, as there is no record of any further dealings with the property for that period.

Meanwhile Edward and Henry, of Handsworth, had died, and Thomas, surviving, had become the owner. Symon Wastell had also departed, and one Allen Wastell was claimant in his stead.

The Wastells were old residents at Saltley, a manor of which the Ardens (distant relations of John Shakespeare's wife) were the lords.

There are many entries relating to the Wastell family in the register of the parish church of Aston, a church, by the way, of which the late George Russell French, writing of the Shakespeare and Arden families, says:—"As containing memorials of William Shakespeare's relations on the mother's side, Aston Church (next Birmingham) may be regarded with an interest second only to that which surrounds his own last resting place." Under date, 1612, June 20, is the entry:—Buried, Owld Allen Wustell, Sawtley; 2nd Octr., 1615, Allyn, Sonne of Will Wastell, Saltley; 26 Sept., 1617, Bap Margret fil William Wastall; 30 Sep., 1621, Bap John fil Will Wastell; and in 1625, 4 Decr., is the marriage, with licence, of Bartholomew Austin and Ann Hunt. Numerous references to the Willies, Austens, and Osbornes may also be met with in King's Norton, Handsworth, and Barr.

The proceedings in the Stratford Court of Requests before referred to were instituted by Allen Wastell in October, 1638 (not 1639 as stated by Mr. J. P. Collyer), for the recovery from Thomas Willies of the two pieces of land (originally part of the Shakespeare estate), and according to Mr. Collyer such pieces of land were purchased not from John Shakespeare, but from his son William. This must assuredly be an error. There is no evidence existing, nor has it ever been suggested, that John Shakespeare in his lifetime parted with the ownership of his Henley-street property, yet this would have to be accepted if Mr. Collyer has correctly quoted from what he terms the tedious technicalities of the record.

The failure to discover any further particulars of the litigation is satisfactorily accounted for by the evidence which has since turned up that the suit was settled out of court. Allen Wastell satisfactorily proved his claim, and as early as the 18th February ensuing, 1639, the following deed was signed:—Indenture between Allen Wastell of Saltley wthin the p'ishe of Birmingham Aston Yoma' of th' one pte and Thomas Willies of Hounswrth of the other pte. Whereas the said Thomas Willies standeth now possessed and seized of estate of in-

heritance of and in one messuage or tenement and burgage wth th' app'tences called the bell, otherwise the signe of the bell heretofore used or occupied in two tenements scituate lying and being in Stratford-upon-Avon in the county of Warr in a streete there comonly called henley street, between the tenement of Thomas Hornbie, the tenement late Willm Shakspeare the street aforesaid and the King's highe way called Gilpitts on all parts and of the gardens houses edifices barnes stables &c. thereto belonging. And whereas also the aforesaid Allen Wastell hath or doth pretend tythe or interest of in and to seaventeen foot square being some part of the tenement p'cell of the pr'mises wch lyeth next adjoininge, unto the before mentioned tenement late William Shakespeare, in consideration of nine pounds Westell releases and for ever quits claim to Willies of and in all that the aforesaid part and parcel of the foresaid tenement containing seaventeen foote square. Signed interchangeably the day and yeare first before wrytten 1638. The witnesses are Henry Osborne and Robert Willmott. The insertion of the year is unusual. The year then ended 25th March, therefore 1639 is the actual date.

Two years previously Thomas Willies had created an annuity of £3 in favour and for the better mayntenance, lively hoode, and stay of livinge of his wife Anne, yf it should please God that she should survive him, charged upon that messuage or tenement and burgage called the Bell, "now or late" in the occupation of Joyce Rumney, widow, the trustee being Henry Osborne, of Perry Barr, yoman, and the witnesses William Crosse, William Osburne, and Ann Osburne.

In 1620 Thomas Nash, Esq., the husband of Shakespeare's grand-daughter, purchased the adjoining or Hornbie's house, and in 1647, one month and three days before his death he acquired the Bell, and being already possessed, in right of his wife, of the Shakespeare property in Henley-street he now joined together all the properties between the White Lion and the Corporation estate.

Thomas Willies was then dead and his son Henry, who had removed to Stratford-on-Avon, occu-

pied the Bell, of which he had become owner. In the conveyance to Nash he was described as a nailor. It seems, therefore, improbable that the Bell was used as a tavern; indeed, Brookes was the only tenant whose occupation is proved to have been that of a publican.

The purchase money paid by Nash was £108, and the descriptions in the conveyance were identical with those preceding save that Horneby's house is called the tenement of Mr. Nash on the east and Shakespeare's house the tenement in the tenure of John Rutter on the West. The wife and mother of Henry Willis and Henry Osborne (the annuity trustee) were parties, and the witnesses were Robert Groves, Birmingham Baker, Henry Osborne, William Lyndon (probably of Stratford, gentleman), and Henry Pratt. Possession was given the last day of March, four days before Nash's death, the witnesses being Thomas Taylor, John Bromley, Richard Edwards, and Thomas Warren. A rudely-written memorandum on the outside says "ye deeds of Wid. Romlys *alias* Wm. Coles house in henly streete."

Thomas Nash, whose death took place the 4th April, 1647, specially devised Hornby's premises to his nephew, Edward Nash, to whom he also made an inoperative devise of New Place and then gave him generally all real estates he might have at his death. Notwithstanding this fact he, on the 20th January, 1655, in consideration of £60 paid to Alexander Fry, Esq., Lieutenant in Col. Hewson's regiment, and Katherine his wife, took a conveyance of the Bell property. He is therein designated of London, merchant taylor, and Robert Clarke, London, gentleman, and Joseph Phillips, of Stratford-upon-Avon, yeoman (probably the Joseph Phillips who afterwards kept the Falcon), are parties in the deed. The descriptions of the Bell, messuage, or burgage, the 17 foot square land, and the piece at the back are fully set forth, a barn being specially mentioned. Joice Roumney, widow, is said to be the tenant. Seven years later, on the 1st of September, 1662, Edward Nash leased to James Strayne, of Stratford-upon-Avon, glazier,

all those messuages, &c., in Henley-street, commonly heretofore called the Bell, between the message or tenement called the *Maydenhead*, now in the possession of John Tommes, on the north-west side, and the message or tenement now in the possession of Richard Hornby on the south side, and all shops, sellars, sollars (i.e., attics, or upper rooms) chambers, &c., in the occupation of James Strayne, one William Horne, and Samuel Burfoote, for a term of fifteen years, at a rent of £5.

Here, then, is an original description of the Bell property. Even the points of the compass are changed. The house has ceased to be called by its old name, in fact, it has been converted into three tenements, and let to a glazier. If the conveyance of 1647 to Thomas Nash is reliable Joice Rounney's tenacy did not exist in 1655.

The subsequent devolution of the property may be briefly stated. In 1678, Edward Nash made a long settlement in favour of his grandchild, Mary one of the children of his daughter Mary, the wife of Reginald Forster, of his several messuages and his arable meadow and pasture land in Stratford-upon-Avon and Old Stratford. His grandchild dying without children, as also did her brother, Reginald, her sister Jane, the wife of Franklin Miller, became owner. Mrs. Miller left two children, Nicholas Miller, whose son, Franklyn Nicholas Miller, died without issue, and Jane, who married William Noroliffe, of the Middle Temple, their son, Reginald, dying without issue. Mrs. Noroliffe, in 1748, left her estates to Edward Munday, Esq., of Shipley, Derby, from whom, in the year 1760, John Keen, of Stratford-upon-Avon, maltster, purchased the property described as six messuages in Henley-street for £110.

Whatever changes in the old tenement erected 200 years before were effected by John Keen can have little interest. The whole has now been swept away, unless, indeed, the prettily-restored cottage home of the Misses Chattaway, the custodians of the old homestead of the Shakespeares, originally formed a part of it. The probability is that he remodelled or rebuilt the old Bell tenement.

He was a substantial maltster and extensive land-owner. He lived and died in the house which at the time of his death, with the barns and stables, was worth £13 10s per annum. Subsequently it was tenanted by Leonard Court, of an ancient Stratford family, and whose relative afterwards purchased the Birthplace. In 1808, the property was purchased by Mr. George Barke, of Stratford-upon-Avon, gentleman, for £350, and was then described as heretofore in the occupation of John Keen, and now or late of Susanna, widow of Leonard Court, late deceased, with barn, stable, and foldyard thereto. Afterwards the property was described as belonging to Dr. Connolly, and was occupied by Mr. Gill, wine and spirit merchant, not, however, as a publichouse. Subsequently it was acquired by the Birthplace Trustees, its appearance before its destruction being preserved by a photograph hanging in the Birthplace Museum.

The picturesque, half-timbered, and quaint block of buildings in Henley-street, forming two tenements and known as the Birthplace, has an interest far surpassing that of any other erection in the world. It has been the subject of long and painstaking research, and any notice with regard to it at the present day must necessarily be a repetition of oft-published descriptions. The world is indebted to two men for nearly all that is known respecting it, the one Mr. Robert Bell Wheeler, the Stratford solicitor and antiquary, the other Mr. J. O. Halliwell-Phillipps, the earnest and ardent investigator of everything connected with William Shakespeare, and it in no way discredits the former to say that his information is now somewhat superseded, and in various important particulars corrected, by the published results of the long and exhaustive investigations of Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps.

The block of buildings, it may be surmised, was comparatively recently erected when, shortly after 1550, John Shakespeare established himself there. On the eastern side stood the two old tenements which were removed in 1598. The extension of the town was slow, and for a long period this was

doubtless near the extreme limit. The erection of substantial houses (alongside) mean cottages was common in all market towns. Possibly one or more humble thatched cottages were removed to make way for the building, the fame of which was to be world-wide. The spot had great advantages. Partially open in front to the Rother Market, it was completely so to the whole country from Shottery to the Welcombe Hills.

Although the two tenements were built together upon an uniform plan, yet so early as 1556 each house was distinct, and held by separate owners. John Shakespeare must have been a very young man when, about 1550 or 1551, he became tenant of one or other or both of these houses. Maybe he succeeded to the business of a deceased master, some members of whose family might continue to reside in one of the houses, in which case his occupancy would be of the business part, subsequently the Maidenhead, perhaps sleeping at his father's house at Snitterfield until his marriage, when, the other house becoming void, he became the tenant, retaining the old premises for his storehouse.

That he had learnt his business as a Stratford apprentice can scarcely be doubted; that he won the love of Mary Arden, the youngest daughter of his father's landlord, and commenced life with very bright prospects, is well known. His young wife was the child of Robert Arden, of Wilmoote, by a first wife. Her mother, who was dead, was presumably of some good yeoman stock of the neighbourhood, possibly of the family of Greene, the later members of which claimed the poet as their cousin. The marriage took place in 1557, the year after Robert Arden's death, and also the year after Edward West had sold to John Shakespeare the tenement presumably occupied for business purposes. The proof of this latter fact is given by Mr. Halliwell-Phillips in the fifth edition of his *Outlines* in an extract from the Stratford Manorial Rolls.

View of Frankpledge, 2nd October, 1556, 3rd and 4th Phillip and Mary:—"Also that Edward West has alienated to the aforesaid John Shakespeare one tenement with a garden adjoining in Henley-

strete, by the rent thereof to the Lord of 6d per annum, and the same John aforesaid has done his fealty in Court."

At or shortly after this period the adjacent house was owned by one Edmund Hall and his wife Emma, who may have been the sister or possibly the daughter of this same West. The point, however, is unimportant. That John Shakespeare had occupied this or the adjoining house at least some five years previously is known from the fact that he had, in the early part of 1551, accumulated in the street a heap of filth or dung, for which he was presented before the Lord's Court held in April, and amerced the customary shilling, an incident indicative of his combining the trade of a butcher with his other occupations. That after his marriage he occupied with his wife the whole block is beyond reasonable doubt. Here their children were born, and some early lost.

Joan, born 1558, September, died 1569.

Margaret, born 1562, December, died 1563.

William, born 1564, April.

Gilbert, born 1566, October.

Joan, born 1569, April.

Anna, born 1571, September, died 1579.

Richard, born 1574, March.

Edmund, born 1580, May.

The messuages tenanted and part owned by John Shakespeare occupied a frontage of some twenty yards to the street. Each had an entrance between two windows. That of the eastern house or store led through a passage direct to the back. All the rooms throughout were of an unequal size; between the eastern wall and the two old tenements adjacent was possibly a space of five yards. That the 15ft. square piece before referred to actually fronted the street here is, however, uncertain. The boundary line backward was peculiar, the piece sold away in 1598 having eight yards in the inner and fifteen on the outer side, the reason being shown by an almost similar peculiarity on the eastern boundary of the Bell, some out-offices built over-lapping the adjoining land standing diagonally from Henley-street. The modern boundary line on the east, if now

restored, would be nearly 55 yards, but formerly was considerably shorter, by reason of the then great width of the Guild Pits. Farther east the old road line is distinctly traced from the present street line to Shakespeare's garden. It may have been somewhat less, but an ancient ivy trunk growing from a very old wall foundation on the eastern side is exactly that distance from the Guild Pits. The back of the garden, allowing from the present wall length ten yards as belonging to the Bell, was about 35 yards. Shakespeare's barn would stand to the old line of road, as would cottages, barns, and other erections along the road. A remarkable survival exists in an old Elizabethan tower-like edifice 60 or 70 yards away towards the Avon, an interesting building, said to have been the workshop of Edward Grub, the Stratford sculptor, who died in 1816.

The western or White Lion side of Shakespeare's garden must have been nearly identical with the present line, save its lesser length. The depth of the houses from Henley-street was and is six yards, but the middle bay projecting outward into the garden in an oblique form extends five yards on one side and eight yards on the other. The reason for the construction of this part of the building in its crooked shape was to maintain the parallel line of the land at right angles with the Guild Pits.

Such was the homestead with which William Shakespeare in his earliest years was associated, and of which, when he was eleven years of age, his father became completely the owner by the purchase of the remaining or western house from Edmund Hall and his wife in the year 1575. Of the conveyance from the Halls no trace has been found, but, as was then customary, it was essential to prosecute a fictitious suit in the King's Court of Westminster. The end or fine of suit was recorded in the Court, and a copy of the record written upon a strip of parchment in court hand by the chirographer of the Court was taken out by a London lawyer, and sent into the country. The descriptions in these fines are particularly vague, uninteresting, and unreliable, yet in this instance

are we indebted to the preservation, by Mr. R. B. Wheler, of the copy of fine to John Shakespeare for the most material evidence respecting the Birth-place. Reduced to common-place language, this document records that in Michaelmas Term, 1575, before James Dyer, Richard Harpur, and other justices of the Queen, a final decree had been made in a suit between John Shakespeare, complainant, and Edmund Hall and Emma his wife, defendants, regarding two messuages, two gardens, and two orchards, with appurtenances, in Stratford-on-Avon, viz., that Hall and wife acknowledged the said tenements to be the right of John Shakespeare according to law, and lawfully surrendered the same to Shakespeare and his heirs, and moreover granted for themselves and the heirs of Emma Hall the said tenements, and warranted Shakespeare and his heirs against themselves and the heirs of Emma Hall for ever and for such acknowledgment, warrant, fine, and concord, John Shakespeare rendered Hall and wife £40 sterling.

This goes far to prove first—that the house had belonged to the family of Hall's wife; and, second, that there were two houses (in addition to the one bought of West in 1556). Descriptions in fines were fictitious generally in the number of the appendages, gardens, &c. (in later years absurdly so); but seldom in the number of houses. Had another property in Stratford been sold one fine would have sufficed for the two, but such duplicate sale was in the highest degree improbable. That another house, small, old, and dilapidated, stood upon the land appears, therefore, certain, and the existence of such a building would explain why the substantial buildings of the West family had been erected on one corner of the land. It is equally certain that no barn existed. Its non-mention would have been a fatal omission, although had a barn been mentioned it would be no proof of one existing.

Tradition says that John Shakespeare was a butcher, a glover, and a wool dealer. The designation "yoman," as then used, covered all these and many other occupations. Statutes of Edwd. and

Eliz. enacted that a butcher should not be a tanner, and that wool should only be bought by a merchant of the staple, or the makers of "yarn cloths, knit hose, petticoates, gloves, hattes, tapestries," &c. How far these restrictions were enforced is doubtful, but that he was a producer or grazier is by their existence rendered more than probable. Tradition, partially supported as it is by written evidence, may, therefore, be safely accepted even to the inclusion, to a moderate extent, of the occupation of a butcher, the custom of combining various avocations of this character having long been common.

It is, however, I think, improbable that the trade of a tanner, currier, or dresser of skins was carried on by him at all events on the Henley-street premises. The supply of water, notwithstanding the existence of two wells, was insufficient, and the evidence of any lime or other pits having ever existed there is absent. The known prosperity of John Shakespeare during the first thirty years of his married life proves that he required the whole space at his command. It even renders probable his renting all or part of the adjoining property, the two old houses of E. Willies, standing till 1598. By some such means the inconvenient boundary between the two properties may have been improved, ending as has been shown by his selling about 65 square yards, which abutted into his neighbour's land. It also caused the building by him of a barn against the Guildpits, which thereafter became a part of the legal description of the property.

The period from April, 1564, to November 1582, from the birth of William Shakespeare until his marriage, has the greatest possible interest with regard to the Birthplace, and this is the time during which little reliable information (save as to the purchase from Hall and wife) exists. We know that here he went through his first stages of "mewling and puking" his school-going, with "satchel and shining morning face." From here he made his start in life, whether as a butcher's apprentice, assistant to his father, teacher in a country school, or to acquire those technicalities and phrases of the

law and thorough mastery of comprehensive wording of which his writings show such complete mastery. Here he grew into the lover, making ballads to his mistress. The rooms above his father's store, the cosy kitchen corner, every nook and cranny of the place is hallowed from the knowledge that for eighteen years here was his cradle, play place, and home.

After this marriage comes the pecuniary embarrassments of his father—summons for debt, loss of dignity, process, arrest, and imprisonment, then his own domestic cares with three children before he was of age, and without a fixed employment. There was ample room in the old house, and those were not the times for incurring the expense of another house. For the next few years, therefore, we may suppose this roof sheltered the youthful husband and his family, and still more likely is it that during the enforced absence of his father and after his own departure for London his wife (her own father being dead) would, with her three children, still share the humble fare to which the matron descended of Arden's house was reduced.

The rapid change of fortune which now followed is the most interesting chapter in the history of the Shakespeare family. The speedy success which attended the zeal, industry, and talent of the young dramatist had its reflex in the old home, and if his marvellous advancement had the effect of removing his wife and children to a home of their own, of which, however, we have no assurance, it was certainly not caused by any estrangement between father and son. In a few years the father's difficulties vanish, and he resumes his former position, for in 1592, August, he was the appraiser of the goods of Henry Field, a deceased tanner, of Stratford, an office denoting trustworthiness and responsibility, together with a knowledge of the trade. Four years later and about 10 years after Shakespeare's leaving Stratford he procured for his father, John Shakespeare, gentleman, a grant of arms, and for himself the ownership, and, perhaps, the occupancy of the largest and best house in Stratford.

Documentary evidence now gives us another glimpse of the changes in Henley-street. We may take it for granted that repairs and improvements succeed to long neglect of the property, and this being followed by the sale of a small strip of the estate, it may be well to show the position in which John Shakespeare's freehold stood to its neighbours in the year 1590.

Upon the death of the Lord of the Manor in 1589, and the reverting of the manor to the Crown, one of those inquisitions, the preservation of the records whereof are of great advantage to local historians, was taken, and a very complete extract therefrom is given by Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps in the fifth edition of his *Outlines*, p. 616. Commencing with the tenement belonging to the Corporation, distant a few houses east of the Birthplace, next adjoining the house of Hornby, the blacksmith. The land of the Corporation subsequently by awards from the Inclosure of the waste extended across the Guild-pits, and for a considerable distance there bounded several pieces of land known a century back as the Maidenhead Pieces and Crabtree Close, but formerly common land. The manorial tenancy of this Henley-street house is thus described:—

The bailiff and Burgesses of the town of Stratford, free tenants of one tenement, with appurtenances, by the annual rent to the Lord of 3d.

Then follow the houses in rotation westward.

Richard Hornebie, free tenant of one tenement, with appurtenances, by the annual rent to the Lord of 5d.

John Wylles, free tenant of two tenements, with appurtenances, by the annual rent to the Lord of 8d.

John Shackespere, free tenant of one tenement, with appurtenances, by the annual rent to the Lord of 6d.

The same John (idem Johannes) free tenant of one tenement, with appurtenances, by the annual rent to the Lord of 13d.

George Badger, free tenant of one tenement, with appurtenances, by the annual rent to the Lord of 10d.

John Ichivar, free tenant of one tenement, with appurtenances, by the annual rent to the Lord of 12d.

The Bailiff and Burgesses of the town of Stratford, free tenants of one tenement, with appurtenances, by the annual rent to the Lord of 3d.

That these surveys were taken on the spot specially for the Inquisition goes far to prove that the various tenancies stood precisely in the order here set down. A similar survey of the Manor of Birmingham was made by one John Combes and others, surveyors of the late Duke of Northumberland.

It has been before suggested that an ancient cottage tenement stood upon the western side of John Shakespeare's land, and was the second house included in the conveyance to him from the Halls in 1575. If so, it had clearly been removed or fallen down before 1590. That such a tenement did formerly exist is probable from the terms of the following conveyance of a toft or strip of land from John Shakespeare to his neighbour George Badger:—

To all the faithful in Christ to whom this present writing shall come, John Shakespere of Stratford-upon-Avon in the county of Warwick, greeting in the Lord everlasting.—Know ye that I, the aforesaid John, for, and in consideration of, the sum of 50s of good and lawful money of England, to me by one George Badger of Stretford aforesaid, draper, in hand paid, (whereof I confess that I am truly paid and satisfied, and that the said George Badger his heirs, executors, and administrators, are thereof quit and exonerated for ever by these presents,) have bargained and sold, and have given granted, and by this my present deed confirmed, to the aforesaid George Badger, his heirs and assigns, all that my toft and parcel of land, with the appurtenances lying and being in Stretford-upon-Avon aforesaid, in a certain street there called Henlye Strete, between the free tenement of me the aforesaid John Shakespere, on the east part, and the free tenement of the aforesaid George Badger on the west part, containing in breadth by estimation the half of one yard (virgate) at each end, and lies in length from the aforesaid street called Henlye Strete on the south part, up to the King's highway there called Gyll Pittes on the north part, containing by estimation in length 20 and 8 virgates or thereabouts, and now is in the tenure or occupation of me the aforesaid John Shakespeare. To have and to hold the aforesaid toft and parcel of land, with the appurtenances, to the aforesaid George Badger, his heirs and assigns, to the sole and private service and use of the said George Badger, his heirs

and assigns for ever, to hold of the chief lords of that
 fee, by service thereof previously due and of right
 accustomed. And I truly, the aforesaid John Shake-
 speare, and my heirs, all the aforesaid toft and parcel
 of land with appertences to the aforesaid George
 Badger, his heirs and assigns, to the service and use
 abovesaid, against all peoples, will warrant and for
 ever defend by these presents. Know ye moreover,
 that I the aforesaid John Shakespere, in my own
 person, have conveyed and delivered full and peaceable
 possession and seizin of and in the aforesaid toft and
 parcel of land with appurtenances, to the aforesaid
 George Badger, according to the force, form, tenor,
 and effect, of this my present deed thereof made to
 him. In testimony of which matter, to this my present
 writing I have affixed my seal. Given on the 26th
 day of January, in the 39th year of the reign of our
 lady Elizabeth, by the grace of God, queen of England,
 France, and Ireland, defender of the Faith, &c., 1596.

Sealed and delivered, and peaceable possession and
 seizin of the toft and parcel of land within written,
 was delivered by the within-named John Shakespere,
 to the within written George Badger, on the day, and
 in the year within written, according to the form,
 tenor, and effect, of this present deed, in the presence
 of that is to say, Richard Lane, Henry Walker, by
 me William Courte, the writer, Thomas Loche,
 Thomas Beseley.

The descriptions in this deed require careful
 attention. The word "toft" is an old law term,
 and was used in fines as "toftum and croftum."
 It signified a message, or rather "a place where a
 message hath stood." Manley's edition of Cowell's
 Law Dictionary, 1684. According to Bailey it is
 "a message or house, or rather a place where a
 message once stood that is fallen or pulled down."
 Therefore, construed literally, in Shakespeare's
 younger days, a ruinous old house stood here, and
 would, doubtless, be of some use to his father in
 his trade. In "Two Gentlemen of Verona," one of
 his early works, he writes:—

Leave not the mansion so long tenantless
 Lest, growing ruinous, the building fall
 And leave no memory of what it was.

And again in the 13th Sonnet—

To let so fair a house fall to decay
 Which husbandry in honour might uphold
 Against the strong gust of a winter's day.

But what could George Badger want with a strip of land half-a-yard wide? He may have re-built his house, and inadvertently exceeded his boundary, probably ill-defined, and made the purchase to settle or avoid a law suit.

Like a fair house built on another man's ground, so that I have lost my edifice by mistaking the place where I erected it.—*Merry Wives of Windsor*, Act 2, Sc. 2.

Ford is supposed to be a Stratford character. May he not represent Badger?

Again, the boundary may have been a hedge and ditch, or (and this seems to me most probable) a passage or joint way from the street may have existed, and this was a surrender of Shakespeare's interest in it. In any case the creation and use of the word toft—for it could not be copied from an earlier deed—clearly connects it with a former house on the spot.

The length of this strip, too, has an interest. It is described as twenty-eight yards to the Guildpits. I have measured the present existing boundary line, and make it $44\frac{1}{2}$ yards. This leaves sixteen yards as the increased length by the addition of the land, formerly part of the King's highway.

The year of the sale to Badger was an important one to the Shakespeare family. The heir to the house, Hamnet, had but recently died, at the early age of eleven. The right of Mr. John Shakespeare to bear arms had still more recently been granted, but greater even than these, the people of Stratford, on the return home of visitors to London, were oft apprised of the fast-growing fame as a dramatist and poet of Will Shakespeare. Prints of his plays, of his "Lucrece," and of his thrice-printed "Venus and Anthonis" raised the wonder and admiration of his fellow-townsmen, when they were startled by the news that he had bought New Place. These were proud days for his father and mother in their declining years, and the prosperity under the old roof was rendered sweeter by the memory of recent adversity.

Very soon after this period came the sale to Willies, upon which the son's advice would be sought. A very great improvement to Shakespeare's property

was proposed by the removal of the two old cottages, and the erection of a good substantial tenement in their place. To effect this, it was essential to transfer to Willies the bit of land, five yards square, and pointed slip, measuring eight yards on one side, and eleven on the other. This, without doubt, had formerly been occupied by some insignificant outbuildings. Thereafter the Birthplace boundary was well-defined and compact.

The next change was an important one. In September, 1601, John Shakespeare (his age being from 73 to 76) was carried to his grave, whereupon, subject to the widow's dower, his heir, William, became owner. Down to the time of his mother's death in 1608 she would doubtless pass much of her time at New Place, and yet continue her own home, the Harts living with her in that part always distinguished as their dwelling.

At what period the other house was converted has never been ascertained. It may, however, be assumed that after the father's death the need for it would cease. In 1609, and again in 1613, it is called "the tenement late Willm. Shaksper," a somewhat unusual description, the word late being an interlineation in the earlier deed, which may signify that it had now gone out of the occupation of its owners, the Shakespeares, although it is possible that its meaning may be that William Shakespeare had actually occupied it. In 1611 it is called the freehold of one John Shaksper, a repetition, doubtless, from the conveyance to Willies of about 1598, again repeated in December, 1613.

In January, 1603, one Lewis Hiccox obtained a license for an inn in Henley-street, and in June following Jane Brook, wife of Robt. Brooke, who occupied the adjoining house, the Bell, swore the peace against Lewis Hiccocks, the transgressor being his wife, Alice, and again in 1606 the Henley-street names of Robert Brookes, inholder, Francisus Hornbye Smyth, John Brookes, glover, Ludovious Hiccox, inholder, appear in conjunction. It is not, therefore, unreasonable to fix 1603 as the date of the tenement of John Shakespeare becoming the Maidenhead inn, a title which may have been given to it by William Shakespeare himself. The Hiccox's

often appear in connection with property in and about Stratford, this Lewis Hiccox being tenant to William Shakespeare in 1602 of land he purchased of the Combes.

William Shakespeare, would be careful to uphold this property. By his will March, 1616, he gave to "my said sister Joan £20 and all my wearing apparel, and I do will and devise unto her the house, with the appurtenances in Stratford, wherein she dwelleth, for her natural life, under the yearly rent of 12d."

This may possibly have been a nominal rent, but more likely the rent payable to the chief manorial lord of Stratford reduced from 13d by the apporportionment of one penny in respect of the strip sold to Badger. Subject to this life interest the two houses were settled, with all his other landed estate, upon his daughter, Susannah Hall, from whom it passed to her daughter Elizabeth, first married to Thomas Nash, and afterwards to Sir John Barnard. Nash treated it as his property, and dealt with it in his will, but his widow, with her mother, Mrs. Hall, re-settled the various estates in 1647, and, with her second husband, again in 1652, whereby she was enabled ultimately to dispose of them by will. Lengthy Chancery proceedings by Edward Nash, the heir of Thomas, intervened, and from various legal documents and other sources it is ascertained that in 1639 Joan Hart occupied the Birthplace, and Jane Hiccox the Maidenhead.

In 1647 John Rutter had become the tenant of the messuage commonly called or known by the name of the Maidenhead, now or late in the tenure of John Rutter, and the other tenement, now or late in the occupation of Thomas Hart adjoining, unto the messuage called the Maidenhead. The term barns had now been added to the description, but whether a barn was first built by John Shakespeare or William is not known.

By the will of Lady Barnard, January, 1669-70, she gave the messuage or inn, commonly called the Maidenhead, with the appurtenances and the next house thereunto adjoining, with the barn belonging to the same, now or late in the occupation of

Michael Johnson or his assigns, with appurtenances, &c., to **Thomas Hart**, the son of **Thomas Hart**, late of Stratford-upon-Avon, and the heirs of his body.

The Birthplace with the barn would appear to be occupied now by **Michael Johnson**, and the reason for this may be that upon the death in 1661 of **Thomas Hart**, Shakespeare's nephew, his widow left the house. Her younger son, **George Hart**, a tailor, was married before his father's death, but he would not occupy till he inherited the two houses on the death of his elder brother **Thomas**, without leaving issue.

The family of **Michael Johnson** were intimately connected with the Shakespeares for nearly a century. In 1591 **Robert Johnson** was owner of the property (**Ichivar's**) adjoining **Geo. Badger's**, and it was held by his descendants till 1685. In 1619 his son **Michael** was a witness on the sale of **Hornby's** house to **Jelffe**. In 1642 another **Michael Johnson**, mercer, being then 26 years of age, was witness to **Thomas Nash's** will, and in 1648 was an important witness in the Chancery proceedings, deposing that from the age of 11 he had known **Thomas Nash**. If this was **Lady Barnard's** tenant of the Birthplace in 1670, his age would then be 54. In 1661, **Michael Johnson**, gentleman, purchased, for £120, **Bridge Ham meadow**, formerly belonging to **William Combe, Esq**; and in 1666 settled it on his sister's child, **Elizabeth Harbidge**, on her marriage with **John Hunt**, of **Alcester**, gentleman, in 1680. **Michael Johnson** was the occupier of a barn in **Chapel-lane**. A connection may possibly yet be proved between these **Johnsons** and **Andrew Johnson**, the **Birmingham** bookseller, whose children removed to **Coventry**, and with **Michael Johnson**, the **Lichfield** bookseller, who, in 1706, married **Sara Ford**, of **Packwood**.

Upon the death of **George Hart**, in 1702, the **Shakespeare House** passed to his son, **Shakespeare** (or as he called himself **Shaxper**) **Hart**. This prefix made him an important character in the town, which was even then visited by **Shakespeare's** admirers. He was born 1666, and died 1747. In 1727 he mortgaged his property for £80, probably to make some alterations therein, and the

year before he died he, for £7, sold off a piece of garden ground. The purchaser was John Payton, who had purchased the Swan Inn, formerly Badger's property, from the Rev. Mr. Horn, and also the White Lion, formerly Johnson's property, from William Elderton, and had amalgamated the two houses as one large inn and coaching-house under the name of the White Lion, this small purchase from Shakespeare Hart being used to increase the yard accommodation. The Maidenhead had been occupied by William Powell, afterwards for a short time by one Ledbetter, and in 1730 John Martin was the tenant. According to Mr. R. B. Wheler, the Swan and Maidenhead was suggested as being the correct name for the house, and that it was so named in compliment to the Sweet Swan of Avon and the Maiden Queen. The Swan in Middle-row, Bridge-street, and the nearer Swan, formerly Badger's, would necessitate the use of the single name, and this proximity of the two Swans in Henley-street would decide John Payton in dropping that title. It may, however, have been that the tenant of the Maidenhead then first adopted the lapsed name. All Shakespeare Hart's children died before his widow in 1753, whereupon his nephew, George, became the owner of the property, which now consisted of the Swan and Maidenhead, six other tenements, and the barn. The Birthplace tenement had been subdivided, and first one and subsequently two other houses had been erected upon the spare land, fronting Henley-street. The property was mortgaged by George Hart to his son Thomas in 1757, and no further change occurred till 1770, when an important sale, including a portion of the original building, was made to Alderman Payton, the son of John Payton.

Subsequent to the date of the sale of 1770 (which included a portion of the original building), the Birthplace property became considerably mixed up with the White Lion Inn, which comprised, first, the premises formerly belonging to the family of Badger, the draper, by whom they were sold in 1631 to Thomas Horne, and afterwards converted to an inn, called *The Swan*; and, second, the

adjoining property (Ichivar's) sold in 1591 to Robert Johnson, who appears to have thereupon converted it into the *White Lion*. His descendants held it till 1685, when it was sold to Edward Elderton.

Before the days of railways Henley-street was the most convenient street in Stratford for inn accommodation by reason of the back gates abutting upon the London and Birmingham high-road. When, therefore, these two ancient and flourishing hosteleries were, in the middle of last century purchased and amalgamated by Mr. John Payton as the *White Lion*, very considerable additions were made to it by annexations on the western side of buildings held under lease from the Corporation ; on the eastern side by purchases from the Harts, and by extensions and re-buildings on the Guild-pits front, and the acquirement of considerable land on the opposite side of the Guild-pits, including the customary appendage to a large inn, the shoeing forge, a large bowling green, and sundry pig-styes and outbuildings, the whole formed a posting-house of the first rank, a position it held until the removal of the London coaches from the road.

Mr. C. E. Flower is now the owner of this monument of departed greatness, and by his kindness I am permitted to give some interesting particulars from the title deeds. In July, 1753, is the description :—“ All that messuage or tenement, situate and being in Stratford-upon-Avon, called by the name or sign of the *White Lion*, which said messuage was formerly two messuages known by the several names of the *White Lion* and *Swan inns*, and then lately purchased by the said John Payton of the Rev. Mr. Horn and William Elderton. And all that piece or parcel of land then lately purchased by the said John Payton of Shaxspere Hart, with the buildings thereon erected. And also all two lands of arable lying and being together in the common fields of Stratford aforesaid, abutting upon the highway near the Guild-pits, and then lately purchased by the said John Payton of the said Mr. Horn.”

In 1752 Mr. Payton took a lease for three lives from the Lord of the Manor, the Most Noble Lionel Sackville Granfield, Duke of Dorset, of land from

the Guildpits waste. This land was 2ft. wide and 68yds. 2ft. long, fronting the high road on which the outward wall of stables, coffee-room, &c., had been erected, and also a plot of land on the opposite or north side of the road, on which a pig cot and other buildings stood. This lease, evidently a winking at encroachments, was renewed in 1825 to Thos. Arkell, the then host, by the Most Noble Arabella Diana, Duchess of Dorset.

A recital of 1732 shows the land in Stratford fields came from the Hiccox family, certain allotments being substituted by the Inclosure of 1774.

A deed of 1791 shows that the bowling green was formed from a close called the shop close, which apparently took its name from the shoeing shop, a building which had stood with some pig styes upon the waste land, part of the Guild-pits. The Henley-street land, west of the White Lion, held under the Corporation, measured 20yds. to Henley-street, 17yds. 1ft. 8in. to the Guild-pit, 40yds. 2ft. on the White Lion side, and 30yds. 2ft. 5in. on the side against a messuage, formerly of Charles Butler, and afterwards of John Lane, and used as the Post-office.

Of the numerous and varied additions to the White Lion, by far the most interesting is the purchase of 1770-7, by Payton from George Hart, of the cottage tenement at the eastern end, and forming part of the Birthplace buildings. The three old cottages now pulled down, which occupied the space between Shakespeare's House and the White Lion, and also the land behind these cottages whereon the barn had stood, a small piece of land in diminution of which was sold to Payton in 1746.

The descriptions in the White Lion deeds are repeated down to 1834, the following being used after the 1771 purchase. "The land heretofore of Shakespeare Hart, with the buildings thereon erected, adjoining to the said messuage or tenement, called the White Lion inn. And also all that other piece or parcel of ground whereon a barn formerly stood, and upon part whereof a stable is erected and built, situate at the back of certain cottages in Stratford-upon-Avon aforesaid, in a street there

called the Henley-street, and adjoining on one side thereof to the aforesaid inn, called the White Lion, and or near the said place called the Guild-pits, and adjoining on the other side thereof to the back gates of a certain inn or public-house called the Swan.

Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps has shown in his *Outlines*, p. 627, that in 1694 there were two barns on the Shakespeares property, one "belonging" to the Birthplace, the other "All that one barne standing on the backside neere to the sign of the White Lyon, now in the occupation of Edward Elderton, gent." Further, that in July, 1730, is the description, "and the barn in the said Guildpitts, and adjoining to the gates belonging to the Swan inn, late in the tenure of John Capp."

That the Swan here mentioned and the Swan referred to in the White Lion deeds are identical, and that the Swan and Maidenhead is meant, appear undeniable. The barn stood between the White Lion (formerly the Swan) and the Swan and Maidenhead, at the back of the Henley-street cottages. The gates mentioned led into the common yard appertaining to the inn and the Birthplace. The other barn standing near the sign of the White Lion of 1694, then the next house further west of Elderton's, and having Horn's Swan inn between, would suggest that it was an appurtenant to the Birthplace built on the waste, perhaps with the concurrence of Badger and the Lord of the Manor, and Elderton's tenancy of it favours the suggestion. Indeed, I strongly suspect that both barns were built on the Guild-pits waste. The first-named barn, wherever it stood, had been pulled down or parted with before 1730.

The remainder of the Birthplace property passed from George Hart, 1778, to his son, Thomas, who occupied the tenement afterwards the butcher's shop, and also the cottage, under the same roof, one of the four tenements sold to Payton, 1771, as appears by the particulars of an auction sale of that property, by Mr. Telford, at the house of Mr. Barke, the White Lion Inn, Stratford-on-Avon, on Thursday, 1st of July, 1790. Lot 3, four freshhold messuages or tenements adjoining the White Lion,

in Stratford aforesaid, in the occupation of William Worriow, — Sumner, — Grimmett, and Thomas Hart, the whole at the yearly rent of £7 11s 0d.

At the death of Thomas Hart, chairmaker, in 1793, the Swan and Maidenhead passed to his son, John, of London, turner, afterwards of Tewkesbury, chairmaker, and the Birthplace to Thomas, a butcher, who had recently married the daughter of Thomas Kite; but losing his wife and child that year he let the premises to Hornby.

“MEMORANDUM.—By virtue of an authority from Thomas Hart, Thomas Kite, of Clifford Chambers, in the county of Gloucester, yeoman, lets to Thomas Hornby, of Stratford-on-Avon, butcher, all that messuage or tenement, shop, backside, and premises in the Henley-street, in Stratford-upon-Avon aforesaid, lately occupied by the said Thomas Hart, from the date hereof for one whole year, at and under the yearly rent of seven pounds, the same to be paid quarterly, the first payment to be made at or upon the 20th day of August next. Signed by us this 20th day of May, 1794, Thomas Kite, Thomas Hornby.”

These premises consisted of the messuage, pig-stye, part use of yard, shop at bottom of yard, and other premises, except stable.

Greene's view of 1786 shows the Birthplace was not then a butcher's shop. It may, therefore, have been that Thomas the chairmaker removed to the next house to convert the Birthplace into a shop suitable for his son's trade.

In 1796 Thomas, then of Woolwich, sold his house to his brother John, then of Tewkesbury. Both died in 1800, John devising the whole property to his wife and children, who were the last of the Shakespeare blood who held it.

The Swan and Maidenhead, after Martin's tenancy, was occupied by “Old” John Yates, who was followed after a void of two years by Joseph Jobson, the tenant at the Jubilee. He continued until the property was sold, when his daughter, Mrs. Dowding, and her husband succeeded.

Walpole's new “British Traveller,” referring to the Birthplace, says:—“We arrived in the month of July, 1777, at the White Lion. This is the inn

represented in the entertainment of the Jubilee. In the yard is a sign of Shakspeare. Three doors from this inn is the house in which Shakspeare was born, and here is shown his chair in which he sat in the chimney corner. It has been pretty much cut by different visitors, &c. The people who live in the house say they are his next relations; they are poor, as, indeed, are eleven in twelve of the inhabitants."

There is something sorrowful in the parting by Shakspeare's last surviving relations with the old house after a continuous connection of 250 years. It should never be overlooked that to their veneration for and natural clinging to the old homestead is the nation indebted for the preservation of the building, the structural arrangements of which remained almost unaltered during the whole of that lengthened period.

In 1804 the property had reached its lowest level. The houses had become ruinous, the yard was occupied by old stables, slaughter-houses, and mean out-buildings, a mortgage of £140 encumbered the whole, and the family were in poor circumstances. A sale was inevitable, and in the *Birmingham Gazette* of November 26th, 1804, appeared the following advertisement:—

TO BE SOLD by private Contract, two FREEHOLD HOUSES, with the stables, outbuildings, and yards belonging to the same, eligibly situate in Henley Street, in the Borough of Stratford-upon-Avon, in the County of Warwick, one of which Houses has been more than a century and is now used as a Public House, known by the Sign of the Swan and Maidenhead, in the occupation of Joseph Jobson. The other house adjoins the above premises, and is in the occupation of William Hornsby, butcher. It was in the house occupied by William Hornsby our immortal Bard, Shakspeare, was born about the middle of the 16th century, since which time they have continued in the possession of the Hart Family, the present proprietor being the seventh Descendant in a direct line from Joan Hart, the eldest sister of the Poet.

For further particulars, apply (if by letter post paid) to Mr. Wheler, Solicitor, Stratford-upon-Avon.

Three months elapsed, and no purchaser turning up, the following announcement appeared:—

TO BE SOLD BY AUCTION, BY T. TAYLOR, at the White Lion Inn, in Stratford-upon-Avon, on Thursday, the 7th day of March, 1805, between the hours of three and five o'clock in the afternoon, subject to such conditions as will then be produced, TWO FREEHOLD DWELLING HOUSES, &c. (the description being a copy of the first paragraph of the private sale advertisement, substituting Thomas Hornby for William Hornsby as occupier).

For further particulars apply to Mr. Wheler, Solicitor, Stratford-upon-Avon.
T. Cox, Printer, Chapel Street, Stratford-upon-Avon.

The paragraph alluding to Shakespeare is entirely omitted. Still the property remained unsold until the next year, when Mr. Thomas Court, of the Garrick Inn, became the purchaser at £210. Mr. Court's daughter, Mrs. Skinner, afterwards Jarret, informed me a few years since that the bargain was made on Stratford bridge at four in the morning. Mr. Wheler was Court's lawyer, and the conveyance of 4th July, 1806, was from Mary Hart, widow, and her three children, to Thomas Court, inn holder, his brother, Leonard Court, being dower trustee. The property is described as the Swan and Maidenhead heretofore in the tenure of John Yates, now of Joseph Jobson; the other messuage heretofore in the occupation of Shakespeare Hart, since of Thomas Hart, deceased, and now of Thomas Hornby. Court does not appear to have entered into possession until 1808, for in that year some of the yeomanry pulled down the old sign of the Swan and Maidenhead from over the door, whereupon Mr. Dowding (husband of Dowding's daughter) put up the sign of the Maidenhead, omitting the Swan, which sign was continued by Court and afterwards his widow.

The alterations in the Swan and Maidenhead and the encasing in brickwork were probably effected before the purchaser's occupation.

The Courts held the property forty years. They were the only holders between John Shakespeare's descendants and the nation. Like the Hornbys and the Harts they dated back in Stratford to Elizabeth's days. One Court was alderman in succession to John Shakespeare; another was the lawyer between John Shakespeare and Badger;

and another the apothecary to William Shakespeare. Their connection with Shakespeare's house was a creditable one. They were long guardians of a great trust, and never pandered to popular weakness and vulgar credulity. The ugly casing of brickwork proved a boon, inasmuch as it preserved the fabric which in other hands might have been rebuilt. Mr. Court's daughter treasured with fondness pieces of the main timbers removed by her father's alterations and the few relics associated with the house. The stained glass, the walking stick, verses, letters, &c., she and her sons, respectable tradesmen in Birmingham, desired only to place in responsible hands, and a specially interesting relic, an ancient carved oak figure, found under the flooring, Mr. W. Skinner is willing to replace in the old house in which in their younger days both brothers lived many years.

Upon a recent visit to Henley-street they minutely detailed all arrangements of the old buildings fifty years ago, the old Ranter's chapel on the Bell land, the tenement in the yard of the Maidenhead, near the gates, occupied by Berry, the post-boy at the White Lion, the internal arrangements of the now much altered Birthplace, even to the then as now tottering staircase leading to their bed-chamber, in the roof to which, three centuries back, John Shakespeare's big lad, oft rusblight in hand,

Weary with toil, hastened to his bed,

The dear repose for limbs with travel tired.

Upon the death of Court's widow in 1846, arrangements were made for the realisation and division of his property. Thereupon prompt measures were taken to defeat a rumoured intention of removing the fabric to America. The property was brought to the hammer in 1847, but what a contrast to the attempted auction of forty years previous. The particulars of sale of these two houses are without parallel. They occupy sixteen quarto pages, with a green cover, embellished with views of the Birthplace, Church, Shottery Cottage, and Globe Theatre, portraits of William Shakespeare, Queen Elizabeth, King James, and Ben Jonson. Inside are the two charming views by Brandard, the Birth-room having the figure portraits of Charles

Dickens and the Widow Court. Lengthy extracts are given from the works of Wheler, Knight, Drake, and Irving, and the Church Register entries of the Shakespeare and Hart families. The first page, in obtrusive type, has the following

PARTICULARS OF SHAKESPEARE'S HOUSE at Stratford-upon-Avon, for sale by auction, by Mr. Robins, at The Mart, London, on Thursday, September 16th, at 12 o'clock. Shakespeare's House at Stratford-upon-Avon. The most unique relic amongst England's treasures, and indeed the most interesting monument of the poet's fame which this country boasts.

The Birthplace is said to have been "ruthlessly modernised" by Court's alterations. The solicitor concerned was Mr. Walter Jessop, of Cheltenham, and the conditions of sale provided that the abstract of title should commence with the will of William Shakespeare, the poet; also that the purchaser should not be entitled to require evidence as to any matter of history or tradition relating to William Shakespeare, the poet, or his family, in connection with this property. The whole closes with a plot plan on the green cover, a plan altogether erroneous and misleading, incorrect in almost every particular.

The purchase money was over £3,000, but the subsequent purchases of the adjoining properties, the restoration of the buildings and custodian's cottage, and general transformation to its present form, added to which the large purchases at New Place achieved through the exertions of Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps and others, formed altogether an important and serious undertaking, and a large bequest by Mr. John Shakespeare, of Leicestershire, upon the faith of which great responsibilities were incurred, proving invalid, these responsibilities were greatly increased. All were, however, ultimately overcome, and the important properties acquired are now vested in the Corporation.

In furtherance of the scheme, Mr. C. E. Flower acquired the White Lion, and he generously gave up a slip of land to create a proper and convenient boundary this strip would certainly restore some portion of the strip sold by John Shakespeare to Badger, 1597. His deeds have also a

memorandum endorsed that on the 16th December, 1856, the piece of ground fronting the Guildpits, whereon a barn formerly stood, and upon part whereof stables are erected, situate at the back of certain cottages in Henley-street, adjoining on the N.W. side to the White Lion Hotel stables, on the S.E. to the backyard formerly belonging to an inn, called the Swan and Maidenhead, but now disused as an inn, and containing 372 square yards as shown in the plan, &c., was sold by John Warden to Thos. Thomson, M.D., Wm. O. Hunt, D. Rice, and E. F. Flower, these gentlemen being also termed the Shakespearean Committee.

The vicissitudes and dangers of this interesting building have passed, and the old pile, by Time's fell hand defaced, has by loving hands been converted to a memorial worthy of Stratford's foremost son.



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