

FLEAY FREDERICK GARD

A CHRONICLE HISTORY OF
THE LIFE AND WORK OF
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Frederick Fleay
**A Chronicle History of the Life
and Work of William Shakespeare**

http://www.litres.ru/pages/biblio_book/?art=24727249

*A Chronicle History of the Life and Work of William Shakespeare Player,
Poet, and Playmaker:*

Содержание

INTRODUCTION	5
SECTION I.	10
SECTION II.	63
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	66

Frederick Gard Fleay A Chronicle History of the Life and Work of William Shakespeare Player, Poet, and Playmaker

To him, whose craft, so subtly terse,
(While lesser minds, for music's sake,
From single thoughts whole cantos make),
Includes a poem in a verse; —

To him, whose penetrative art,
With spheric knowledge only his,
Dissects by keen analysis
The wiliest secrets of the heart; —

To him, who rounds us perfect wholes,
Where wisdom, wit, and love combine;
Chief praise be this: – he wrote no line
That could cause pain in childlike souls.

INTRODUCTION

It is due to the reader of a new work on a subject already so often handled as the Life of Shakespeare to tell him at the outset what he may expect to find therein, and to state the reasons for which I have thought it worth while to devote nearly ten years to its production. Previous investigators have with industrious minuteness already ascertained for us every detail that can reasonably be expected of Shakespeare's private life. With laborious research they have raked together the records of petty debts, of parish assessments, of scandalous traditions, of idle gossip; and they have shown beyond doubt that Shakespeare was born at Stratford-on-Avon, was married, had three children, left his home, made money as an actor and play-maker in London, returned to his native town, invested his savings there, and died. I do not think that when stripped of verbiage, and what the slang of the day calls padding, much more than this can be claimed as the result of the voluminous writings on this side of his career. For one I am thankful that things are so; I have little sympathy with the modern inquisitiveness that peeps over the garden wall to see in what array the great man smokes his pipe, and chronicles the shape and colour of his head-covering. But on the public side of Shakespeare's career little has been adequately ascertained; and with this we are deeply concerned. Not for a mere personal interest, but in its bearings on the history of

English literature, we ought to ascertain so far as is possible what companies of actors Shakespeare belonged to, at what theatres they acted, in what plays besides his own he was a performer, what authors this brought him into personal contact with, what influence he exerted on or received from them, what relations, friendly or unfriendly, they had with rival companies, and finally, in what order his own works were produced, and what if any share other hands had in their production. All these matters have been treated carelessly and inaccurately by biographers of the peeping school; and in the last of these we are gravely referred for the chronology of Shakespeare's plays to a schoolboy compilation the author of which is so ignorant as to speak of *Lust's Dominion* as a play of *Jonson's*, the *News from Hell* as a play of *Dekker's*, and Achilles as Laertes' son. This marvel of inefficiency we are told is the best work on the subject; and this while Malone and Drake are accessible to any student. In the present treatise this hitherto neglected side of Shakespeare's career has been chiefly dwelt on. The facts of his private life are also given; but not the documents on which they are founded, these having been excellently well collected and arranged in the recent *Outlines of the Life of Shakespeare*, by J. O. Halliwell-Phillipps, F.R.S., F.S.A., Hon. M.R.S.L., Hon. M.R.I.A. This book is a treasure-house of documents, and it is greatly to be regretted that they are not published by themselves, apart from hypotheses founded on idle rumour or fallacious mis-reasoning. I do not know any work so full of fanciful theories and "ignes

fatui" likely to entice "a deluded traveller out of the beaten path into strange quagmires."¹ There is much else besides documents not given in the present treatise; discussions as to who might have been Shakespeare's schoolmaster, whether he was apprenticed to a butcher, whether he stole a deer out of a non-existent park, whether he held horses at the theatre door or "was employed in any other equine capacity," whether he went to Denmark or to Venice, and whether Lord Bacon wrote his plays for him. On all these points I must refer to earlier and less sceptical treatises. What the reader will find here is – (1.) A continuous narrative in which the statements are mostly taken for granted in accordance with my own view of the evidence accessible to us; (2.) Annals or chronological arrangement of the same facts, with discussion of their mutual interrelations; (3.) Discussion of the evidence on which the chronological succession of Shakespeare's plays is based; (4.) Similar discussions for plays in which he was not main author but only "coadjutor, novice, journeyman, tutor," or even merely one of the possible actors; (5.) A few remarks on the German versions of his plays acted on the Continent; and (6.) Tables of quarto editions of his plays, &c., with a list of all plays entered on the Stationers' Registers from the first opening of theatres to their closing in 1640-42. This last item may seem to be somewhat beyond the scope of this book, but it is greatly needed, and it is better that so difficult a task should

¹ "These phrases to their owner I resign, For God's sake, reader, take them not for mine."

be performed by one acquainted with dramatic literature than by some scissors-and-paste compiler who cannot distinguish a play from a prose tract. As to the preparation for the whole work it has been to me a labour of love, not, I trust, altogether lost. I have read and re-read for it every play accessible to me that dates earlier than 1640, have compiled annals for every known writer of that period and discussions of the dates of his plays, and have compared the results and corrected and re-corrected until a consistent whole has been obtained. Of this whole only the part relating to Shakespeare is here issued. I have to thank the editors of *Anglia Englische Studien* and *Shakespeariana* for enabling me to print some portions relating to other authors, which will, however, require some minor corrections. I have also to thank Dr. Furnivall and Mr. Swinburne for some wholesome criticism upon my earlier work; Dr. Ingleby, Miss Lee, Mr. Boyle, Mr. A. H. Bullen, and especially Dr. H. H. Furness, for kindly sympathy and copies of their own writings, some of which might otherwise have escaped my notice; and above all Mr. P. A. Daniel, for ever-ready help when asked for, and for judicious strictures on received hypotheses or points debatable. The main regret for the earnest student is that so many of these still exist; as any attempt to give a biography of Shakespeare the form which is æsthetically its due must fail so long as the true order of the facts on which it rests is still esteemed matter of argument. If the reader would wish to judge before proceeding further of the quality of such argument in the present work I would refer him to the discussion

on *Mucedorus* or that on *Henry VI.* in subsequent Sections.

One other point requires notice, if not apology. The plan followed in this volume requires much repetition in order that the separate arguments as to the chronological succession of the plays, and as to the order of events in Shakespeare's life, should be presented in intelligible sequence. This is an evil only to be avoided either by mixing up the two, as is usually done, or by numerous cross-references. Either of these methods leads to greater evils, both by interrupting the logical connection of each series (for unfortunately the evidences are mostly independent of each other), and, which is still more important, by obliterating the mutual support given to the arguments in the twofold lines of evidence by their leading in each division to compatible results. The inconvenience of these repetitions has therefore been submitted to.

SECTION I.

THE PUBLIC CAREER OF SHAKESPEARE

On or about Saturday 22d April 1564, William Shakespeare, son of John Shakespeare, glover and dealer in wool, and his wife Mary, *née* Arden, was born in Henley Street, Stratford-on-Avon, and was baptized on the 26th. Nothing whatever is known of his early life, and the few meagre details ascertained as to the condition of his family will be found in a subsequent division of this work. Tradition and imagination have supplied untrustworthy materials, with which his biographers have endeavoured to fill up the gap in our information; but it is not until 28th November 1582 that we find any further reliable fact established concerning him. On that day his marriage bond is dated, he being in his nineteenth year, and his bride, Anne Hathaway, in her twenty-sixth. Their first child, Susanna, was baptized 26th May 1583. To account for this young lady's premature arrival a pre-contract is assumed, but not proved, by recent writers. On 2d February 1585 their twin children, Hamnet and Judith, were baptized; and in 1587, in the spring, Shakespeare gave his assent to a proposed settlement of a mortgage on his mother's Asbies estate. For ten years after there is no vestige of any communication with his family. It is at this

point that his public life begins.

In 1587 Leicester's players visited Stratford for the first time. The company, under the same name, that had performed there in 1576 had as well as Warwick's been dissolved in 1583, in order that the Queen's men might be selected from them. In 1586, during the prevalence of the plague in London, this more recent company had been travelling on the Continent, and on their return to England made a provincial tour. Shakespeare probably joined them during or immediately after their visit to Stratford, and during their travels received his earliest instruction in comic acting from Kempe and Pope, who soon after became noted performers; Bryan also belonged to the company at this date. They probably acted mere interludes, not regular five-act plays. On 4th September 1588 the Earl of Leicester died; and his players soon after found a new patron in Lord Strange. They then settled in London, and acted at the Cross Keys in Bishopsgate Street. The head of the company, in its altered constitution, was "Famous Ned Allen," who on 3d January 1588-9 bought up for £37, 10s. Richard Jones' share of "playing apparels, play-books, instruments, &c.," in order to set up his new company. These properties had belonged to Worcester's men under Robert Brown, and were no longer needed by him, as he and his players were about to visit the Continent.

It was in this way that Shakespeare came to London as a poor strolling player, but nevertheless his position was not without its advantages; he was associated already with the most noted

comedians of the time, Kempe and Pope; and in Alleyn he had the advantage of studying the method of the greatest tragic actor that had yet trod the English stage. But he did not remain content with merely acting; he now commenced as author. In order to ascertain under what conditions, it will be necessary to briefly state what was the position of the companies and authors in London in 1589.

At that date there were two theatres in London: the better of the two, the Theater, was occupied by the Queen's men, for whom Greene was the principal play-writer. Marlowe, Kyd, and R. Wilson had also contributed plays to their *repertoire*, but just at this time left them and joined Pembroke's, which, like Leicester's, had been a strolling company, but were now settling in London. On the other hand, Peele and Lodge, who had previously written for the Admiral's company, acting at the other theatre, the Curtain, had also joined, and still remained with, the Queen's. Nearly all these writers, if not quite all, were actors as well as authors. Greene, the Johannes Factotum of the Queen's men, had evidently expected to establish a monopoly of play-acting in their favour, and was indignant at the arrival of vagrant troops of Thespians from the country, just when he had practically succeeded in crippling the rival company in London, by enlisting some of their best authors in the service of his own. Hence on 23d August 1589 his publication of *Menaphon*, with Nash's address, containing a virulent attack on Kyd and Marlowe, then writing for Pembroke's men, together

with a glorification of Peele, then writing in conjunction with Greene. The absence of any allusion in this tract to Shakespeare or Lord Strange's company conclusively proves that they were not as yet dangerous rivals to the Queen's. Pembroke's men were, and there is indirect evidence that they had from their first settlement in London obtained possession of the second theatre, the Curtain. This evidence is connected with the first direct mention which is extant of Shakespeare's company. For in this same year, 1589, the Martinist controversy had been raging in London; Lyly, Nash, Greene, Monday, and Cooper were the anti-Martinist champions; the Martinists had been ridiculed on the stage in April, probably by Greene at the Theater, possibly by the Paul's children in some play of Lyly's, or by the Earl of Oxford's boys in one of Monday's. The authorities did not interfere. But in November certain players "within the city," to wit, Lord Strange's and the Admiral's, were silenced for "abuses or indecent reflexions" (Strype). A comparison of the *worthies* in *Love's Labour's Lost* with the anti-Martinist writers, of the Euphuist Armado with Lyly, the boy-satirist Mote with Nash, the curate with the Reverend Robert Greene, the schoolmaster-pedant with the pedagogue Cooper, and Antony Dull with Antony Monday, will I think confirm the theory developed by me in a separate essay, that this was the play suppressed on this occasion. It is characteristic of the independence of action shown by Shakespeare's company throughout the reign of Elizabeth that they refused to obey the injunction, and went and played at the

Cross-Keys that same afternoon, while the subservient Admiral's company dutifully submitted. I do not suppose, however, that the play as then performed was in all parts from the hand of Shakespeare. It is extremely unlikely that he should have commenced his career by independent writing, and there is not a play of his that can be referred even on the rashest conjecture to a date anterior to 1594, which does not bear the plainest internal evidence to its having been refashioned at a later time. In all probability he began to compose plays, as we know so many of his contemporaries did, as an assistant to some experienced dramatist. It may seem idle, in the absence of any positive evidence, to guess who was his original tutor in composition, and yet, as the careers of Peele, Greene, and Marlowe conclusively show that none of them were in 1589 connected with Lord Strange's company, I venture to suggest that it was Robert Wilson. That dramatist is not heard of in connection with Pembroke's or any other company after August 1589, and he certainly continued to write for the stage. That Shakespeare was greatly influenced by him and Peele is evident from the metrical character of Shakespeare's earliest work, which abounds in heroic rhyme like Peele's in tragedy, and in doggerel and stanza like Wilson's in comedy. It is not till the Historic plays that the influence of Marlowe's blank verse is fully perceptible, and in the earliest of these, *Richard II.*, rhyme is still dominant. Wilson was in this view a better teacher for the inexperienced Shakespeare than a greater man. Marlowe, for instance, might

have biassed him on the tragic side, and deferred or prevented his comedy from its earlier pastoral development. *Love's Labour's Won* must have been written at about the same time as *Love's Labour's Lost*, and before the end of 1590 *The Comedy of Errors* probably appeared in its original form. In this same year was produced a play in which, although I cannot detect Shakespeare's hand as coadjutor with its probable author, R. Wilson, he most likely appeared as an actor — *Fair Em*; and that this comedy contained a satirical attack on Greene is evident from the offence he took at it, as shown in his virulent address prefixed to his *Farewell to Folly*. Up to this date Greene's chief attacks had been directed against Kyd in *Menaphon* and in *Never too late*, but as yet there has been found no allusion to Shakespeare in his writings anterior to 1592. Yet Shakespeare must have been known to him as at least part author of the plays acted by Lord Strange's men in 1589 and 1590. Of *Romeo and Juliet*, originally acted in 1591, we also possess a version anterior to Shakespeare's final remodelling, which palpably contains scenes not written by him. These scenes, however, seem due to a finer artist than Kyd, and there is independent evidence that George Peele had by 1591 also become a playwright for Lord Strange's men. One of the plays acted by them in this year was probably Peele's *Edward I.*, here mentioned on account of a curious allusion which would seem to fix the character performed by Shakespeare. In scene 3 Elinor says to Baliol —

"Shake [thou] thy *spear* in honour of *his name*
Under whose royalty thou wear'st the same."

Shakespeare is known to have acted "kingly parts," and this of Edward I. was probably one of them. To this same year may probably be assigned the original production of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*.

The Court festivities of Christmas 1591-2 mark an important epoch in the fortunes of Lord Strange's company, and consequently of Shakespeare, now rapidly coming to the front as their chief writer. During the period we have been considering, 1587-1591, the Queen's and the Admiral's were the only men's companies who performed at Court, but at Christmas 1591-2 the Admiral's did not act at all, and the Queen's, after one performance, gave place to Lord Strange's, and until the death of that nobleman in 1594, his players enjoyed almost a monopoly of Court performances. One presentation by the Earl of Hertford's men, of whom nothing else is recorded, one by the Earl of Sussex', and two by the Earl of Pembroke's, are all that can be balanced with six by Lord Strange's in 1591-2, and three in 1592-3. This pre-eminence at Court was retained by the company under all its changes of constitution far beyond Shakespeare's time, until the closing of the theatres in 1642. Possibly the influence of Lord Southampton, who had come to town and entered at Gray's Inn in 1590, and was stepson to Sir Thomas Heneage, the treasurer, may have had something to do

with this. He does not yet, however, appear to have come into direct communication with Shakespeare.

Immediately after this first appearance at Court, Alleyn arranged with Henslow, his father-in-law, to give his company a local habitation in a permanent theatre. This was of no small importance to them; they had hitherto had to play in the inn-yard at the Cross-Keys. Henslow's new theatre was the Rose on the Bankside, which opened in February 1591-2. The singular fact that every old play (*i. e.*, every play that had been previously performed) there acted in this season had been with one possible exception derived from the Queen's players, shows that the hitherto most successful company were reduced to sell their copies, and were probably on the verge of bankruptcy. Among these we find Greene's *Orlando* and *Friar Bacon*, Greene and Lodge's *Looking-glass for London*, Marlowe's *Jew of Malta*, and Kyd's two plays of *Jeronymo*. The only play traceable to another company is Peele's *Battle of Alcazar*, called by Henslow *Mulomorco*. In fact, the Queen's company were now practically without a play-writer. Of their formerly numerous staff Marlowe was writing for Pembroke's men, Kyd and Peele for Lord Strange's, Lodge was abroad, Wilson had left them, and Greene had also quitted them for the Earl of Sussex'. Besides the plays above enumerated, Lord Strange's players acted a dozen others of which only the titles are known, and produced as new plays the following: – On March 3, *Henry VI.* (a re-fashioning by Shakespeare of an old Queen's play, into which he introduced

the Talbot scenes, celebrated by Nash, which drew such crowded audiences); on April 11, *Titus and Vespasian* (a version of the Andronicus story extant in a German translation, and probably written by Kyd); on April 28, the second part of *Tamburlane* (not extant); on June 10, *A Merry Knack to Know a Knave* (probably by Peele and Wilson); and after an interval, during which the theatres were closed on account of the plague, on 5th January 1592-3, *The Jealous Comedy* (probably *The Merry Wives of Windsor*); and finally, January 30, *The Guise* (Marlowe's *Massacre of Paris*).

I have brought together this enumeration of the new plays of Strange's men that the reader may better appreciate the often quoted but sadly misunderstood address by Greene to his fellow-dramatists in his *Groatsworth of Wit*, not published till September after its author's death, but manifestly written and probably circulated in manuscript in the early months of 1592. Its aim is directed against a company of players, "burs, puppets, antics, apes, grooms, painted monsters, peasants," among whom is "an upstart crow, a Johannes Factotum, a Shakescene," who supposes he can bombast out a blank verse. This is palpably directed against Shakespeare and Lord Strange's players, for whom he was then writing and with whom he was then acting. But Greene also says that they had all been beholding to him and to his fellow writers whom he addresses; that is, to Marlowe, Peele, "young Juvenal" (Lodge), and two more (Kyd and Wilson) "that both have writ," whom he might "insert against these

buckram gentlemen." This can only apply to the Queen's players, for which company alone Greene had written up to 1591, having supplied them with a play every quarter and purveyed more plays for them than the other four (Marlowe, Peele, Kyd, and Lodge), as Nash tells us in his *Piers Penniless*. There must then have been an amalgamation of the better portions of the two companies, the Queen's and Lord Strange's, just before the opening of the Rose Theatre, a conclusion confirmed by the fact that the Queen's plays had passed into the hands of the other company, and, as will be seen when I treat of the Henry VI. plays, deduced by me on other and independent grounds. This attack of Greene's was, I think, answered by Shakespeare in his *Midsummer Night's Dream*, produced in its first form c. June 1592. Bottom and his scratch company have long been recognised as a personal satire, and the following marks would seem to indicate that Greene and the Sussex' company were the butts at which it was aimed. Bottom is a Johannes Factotum who expects a pension for his playing; his comrades are unlettered rustics who once obtain an audience at Theseus' court. The Earl of Sussex' men were so inferior a company that they acted at Court but once, viz., in January 1591-2, and the only new play which can be traced to them at this date is *George a Greene*, in which Greene acted the part of the Pinner himself. This only shows that the circumstances of the fictitious and real events are not discrepant; but when we find Bottom saying that he will get a ballad written on his adventure, and "it shall be called Bottom's Dream, because

it hath no bottom" (iv. i. 212) and that peradventure he shall "sing it at her (?) death," we surely may infer an allusion to Greene's *Maiden's Dream* (S. R. 6th December 1591), apparently so called because it hath no maiden in it, and sung at the death of Sir Christopher Hatton. This play of *Midsummer Night's Dream* was produced after the closing of the theatres, c. 12th June 1592, on account of the plague; it and the *Jealous Comedy*, produced 5th January 1592-3, when the theatres reopened for that month only, were almost the last in which Shakespeare worked as a journeyman or with a coadjutor. When he revived these earlier plays for the Chamberlain's men he carefully replaced in almost every instance the work of his quondam companions by other and certainly not weaker lines of his own. Some of his own work of this date, apparently left unfinished on account of the sudden closure of the playhouses, he appears to have taken up and completed in his 1601-2 plays. But no doubt the greater part of this autumn was occupied in writing *Venus and Adonis*, dedicated to Lord Southampton (S. R. 18th April 1593) as "the first heir of his invention," a product of "idle hours:" idle because during the plague no new plays were required of him, nor even rehearsals; the players travelled and acted old plays only. In these circuits a whole company did not usually journey together; it was more profitable to separate into parties of half-a-dozen, and of course to cut down their plays so as to be capable of representation by this small body of actors. One part of Lord Strange's men, consisting of Alleyn, Pope, Bryan, Hemings,

Phillips, and Kempe, so travelled in 1593; but no document has been preserved respecting the remainder of the company, which included probably Burbadge, Sly, Condell, Holland, Cowley, and Shakespeare. It appears from Alleyn's correspondence that Cowley was the bearer of a letter to him from London to Bristol, that his section of the company had been at Chelmsford in May, were at Bristol in August, and afterwards visited Shrewsbury, Chester, and York. Meanwhile, on June 1, Marlowe had been killed in a brawl, and his version of the Andronicus story was acted by Sussex' men at the Rose, 23d January 1594. From their hands this play passed to Pembroke's men c. 8th February, when Sussex' company broke up and went into the country, and from them to the Earl of Derby's before 16th April. But this company of Derby's was no other than Lord Strange's. After Henry Earl of Derby died, 25th September 1593, Ferdinand, his son, who succeeded him, and who had previously borne the title of Lord Strange, was called either Strange or Derby indifferently, he having no son to whom the title of Lord Strange could be, in accordance with custom, assigned in courtesy, although by strict right this title appertained to the Earls of Derby and not to their sons. Along with this Andronicus play the following can be traced as passing from Pembroke's company to Lord Strange's at this date: *The Taming of a Shrew*, *Edward III.*, *Hamlet*, *3 Henry VI.*; and besides this transfer of playbooks there was also a partial transfer of the company itself. Beeston, Cooke, Sinkler, Holland, and others were among these new members. The cause of this

arrangement was no doubt poverty; already on 28th September 1593 they could not "save their charges to travel, and were fain to pawn their apparel." So writes Henslowe to Alleyn.

I must now recur to 1593. Immediately after Christmas the theatres reopened; but at the Rose the Earl of Sussex' men acted instead of Lord Strange's, who played about the city, at the Cross-Keys for example. When Sussex' men broke up, on the 8th April, the Rose remained empty except for three days, 14-16th May, when the Admiral's company acted there, no doubt under Alleyn, who was servant to the Admiral as well as to Lord Strange. The Admiral, however, had himself laid a restraint on the Rose theatre (probably c. 8th April), and ordered that Lord Strange's players should play "three days" (*i. e.*, three days a week) at Newington Butts. This was petitioned against by the watermen, whose calling was greatly in request when the Rose was open, and by Lord Strange's players themselves. No redress appears to have been granted during the life of Lord Strange, who died on 16th April, but when the company had found a new patron in Lord Hunsdon the Chamberlain, and had submitted to the order by playing on alternate days with the Admiral's at Newington Butts, then the restraint on the Rose was removed. The Chamberlain's players, however, did not act there, but under Shakespeare and Burbadge reopened the old Theater, while Alleyn left them and acted with the Admiral's at the Rose.

Before passing to notice the poems written by Shakespeare during this period of "travelling," I may note that these plays

acquired from Pembroke's men appear to have been written by Marlowe or Kyd. *Edward III.*, by Marlowe, was, with alterations by Shakespeare, acted about the city in 1594. *Titus Andronicus* and *3 Henry VI.* were also acted by the Chamberlain's company; but they show no evidence of extensive alterations at Shakespeare's hand; he probably merely corrected them. Another play of this date, *Richard III.*, bears strong internal evidence of Marlowe's craftsmanship, but was no doubt completed and partly rewritten by Shakespeare. The Kyd plays, on the other hand, were not utilised in this way. New plays on the same plots as the old *Hamlet* and *The Taming of a Shrew* were afterwards produced by the Chamberlain's men —*Hamlet* by Shakespeare, *The Taming of the Shrew* by Lodge (most likely), but greatly altered by Shakespeare some years after. Another play performed by Derby's men contemporaneously with these was *The Seven Deadly Sins*. This play had not been derived from Pembroke's men, but from the Queen's, for whom Tarleton had originally plotted it. The plot as acted in 1594 still exists, and is especially valuable as showing the composition of Lord Strange's company at that date. Shakespeare, however, took no part in it. The large number of performers singularly agrees with the statement in the players' petition above alluded to that "our company is great." There was also a play *Lochrine*, published S. R. 20th July 1594, as revised by W. S., which has been interpreted William Shakespeare. I do not think he could in any way have been concerned in this revival of Peele and Tilney's stilted

performance, and suspect that W. S. means William Sly; nor do I think that any other play of Shakespeare's, save those already mentioned, can be assigned to a date anterior to the formation of the Chamberlain's company except *Troilus and Cressida* in its original form, which was probably acted c. 1593. In fact, Shakespeare was from the breaking out of the plague in 1592 until the settlement of his reconstituted company in 1594 chiefly occupied, not with plays, but with poems. His *Venus and Adonis* has already been noticed, and on 9th May 1594 his *Rape of Lucrece* was published. In the Dedication to Lord Southampton, Shakespeare speaks of "the warrant I have of your honourable disposition: " in what especial way Southampton had shown his favour to Shakespeare has been the subject of many conjectures. My own opinion is that he had introduced him as representative of his fellow-actors to Lord Hunsdon, and procured them their new patron; but in a scandalous book called *Willobie his Avis*, published 3d September 1594, the version of the connection between the nobleman and the "old player" is that W. S. had parted with a mistress to H. W. and been rewarded accordingly; and it would be useless to deny that the *Sonnets* written between 1594 and 1598 distinctly allude to some circumstance of this kind. The *Avisa* book was, however, suppressed or "called in" on 4th June 1599, as a libellous production.

This year may be regarded as the turning-point in Shakespeare's public career. Until the establishment of the Chamberlain's company, he had been an actor gradually rising

in the esteem of his fellows, but often obliged to travel and to act about town in inn-yards, and his play-writing had been confined to vamping old plays by other men, or at best to assisting such writers as Wilson or Peele in producing new ones. He had served, as it were, a seven years' apprenticeship. But henceforward he takes his place as one of the chief actors in the principal company in London, acting in a licensed theatre; he is also, with occasional assistance, the sole purveyor of plays to this company, and he is the acknowledged writer of the most popular love poems of his time. For it is to the author of *Lucrece* and *Adonis* that his contemporaries assign their praises far more than to the writer of *Lear* or *Hamlet*. Poems were in their opinion fit work for a prince; but plays were only congruous with strolling vagabondism. It is just at this turning-point that the first nominal mention of Shakespeare is found as acting before the Court at Greenwich on December 26 and 28, along with Kempe and Burbadge.

The performance on 26th December was on the same day that Shakespeare and his company had acted *The Comedy of Errors* at Gray's Inn – the earliest of his plays in their present form, but founded on a previous version, in which another pen was concerned.

On 26th January 1594-5, *Midsummer Night's Dream* was, I conjecture, acted at Greenwich at the marriage of W. Stanley, Earl of Derby, and afterwards on the public stage; it was evidently written for a marriage, but, like the preceding play, had been altered for this special occasion. Its original production was

probably in 1592, at the marriage of Robert Carey, afterwards Earl of Monmouth. In both instances the bridegrooms were close connections of the patrons of the actors; W. Stanley being brother to Ferdinand, Lord Strange, and Robert Carey son to Henry, Lord Hunsdon, the Chamberlain. Another 1595 play was *Richard II.*, evidently an imitation of Marlowe's *Edward II.*

Marlowe was Shakespeare's first model in Historical Plays, as Kyd was in Tragedy and Lyly in Comedy, but he followed Marlowe much more closely than either of the other two. If any other author contributed plays to the Chamberlain's company this year it must have been Lodge, to whom *Mucedorus* and *A Larum for London* may probably be attributed. At Christmas they acted five plays at Court.

In 1596, there is little doubt that Shakespeare produced his *King John*, founded on two old plays on the same subject which were written for the Queen's men in 1589 by Peele, Marlowe, and Lodge. Their plot has been very closely followed by Shakespeare and a few lines borrowed. At some time between 23d July 1596 and 5th March 1597 he also revived *Romeo and Juliet*, at the Theater; this new version was founded on the old play of 1591, in which Shakespeare was only part writer. Of plays by other authors only one can be traced to his company in this year, namely, *Sir Thomas More* (? by Drayton and Lodge). This play was severely handled by the Master of the Revels for its allusions to contemporary events, and the alterations made by him afford instructive study to dramatic critics. On August

5, immediately after the appearance of *Romeo and Juliet*, a ballad on the story was entered S. R., and on August 27, T. Millington was fined for printing ballads on *The Taming of a Shrew* and *Macbeth*. This indicates the existence of a *Macbeth* play at this time, but probably, like the older *Hamlet* and *Lear*, one in whose production Shakespeare had no share. Kempe mentions the *Macbeth* ballad as the first production of its author in his *Nine Days' Wonder*. In February this same year James Burbadge bought the property in Blackfriars, on which he began in November to build the Blackfriars Theatre, wherein in 1597, after some opposition, he succeeded in establishing the Chapel children under Evans. The Chamberlain's company did not act at this theatre in Shakespeare's time. There were six Court performances at Christmas 1596-7.

It is necessary now to recur to Shakespeare's private life. On 5th August 1596 his son Hamnet died, and he unquestionably visited Stratford and renewed relations with his family at this time. John Shakespeare having applied to the Heralds' College for a grant of arms, obtained this concession in October, and in the Easter term 1597 William Shakespeare purchased the property called New Place in Stratford. In November 1597 the Asbies business was revived in a Chancery suit brought by Shakespeare's parents against John Lambert, son of Edmond. In the bill of complaint the Shakespeares describe themselves as "of small wealth, and very few friends;" but it is clear that their wealth must have had a recent accession, or they would not now

have renewed a dispute which, on their own statement, had lain in abeyance since 1580. All these proceedings alike, the acquisition of a residence in Stratford, the obtaining a grant of arms, the endeavour to establish old claims to family property, point to Shakespeare's desire, now that he had succeeded in London and made money, to settle in Stratford as a country gentleman, and found a family. He may have hoped for the birth of another son, his wife being in 1596 still under forty years of age. But the inferences usually drawn from the incidents of this time, that Shakespeare had constantly held communication with his family, whom he had supported during his theatrical career in London, and that he was, on this occasion, largely indebted to the bounty of Lord Southampton, are mere fancies. The natural interpretation of such records as have reached us is that it was not till touched by the hand of the great reconciler Death, in the person of the expected heir to his new-founded fortunes, that he ever visited his family at all during the nine years since he left them to carve his own way as a strolling player. If conjecture is to be allowed at all, I would rather suggest that his family were offended at his choice of an occupation, and that it was not till he had made a marked success that they were reconciled to him.

Returning to Shakespeare's public career – on 5th March 1597 George Carey, Lord Hunsdon, was created Chamberlain, and his players resumed the title of "The Lord Chamberlain's." Early in this year was almost certainly produced *The Merchant of Venice*, founded on an old play of Dekker's called *Joseph the Jew of*

Venice, written c. 1592, and acted in 1594 by the Admiral's men, but not now extant. In the same year was performed *Henry IV*. The comic powers of Shakespeare appear in these plays in their highest development in Shylock and Falstaff, and endeavours have been made by several (myself included) to mark this as the beginning of a new period in his manner of work. In such attempts, however, it is necessary to assign specific single dates to each play, and consequently to neglect the proved fact of frequent alterations of considerable extent having been made at revivals. I think it better to regard as Shakespeare's first period the time anterior to the formation of the Chamberlain's company, 1587-93, during which he was employed only as "journeyman or coadjutor," and not to separate the series of Comedies and Histories which were produced in their perfected forms from 1594 to 1602. It may, however, be noted that at this time, 1597, he had entirely discarded the doggerel couplets and the excessive use of rhyme that mark his early work, and that this fact is useful in analysing plays which, though produced later in the form in which they have reached us, were founded on earlier versions in which he was probably only a part writer. Another play acted by Shakespeare's company this year was Drayton's *Merry Devil of Edmonton*. In this, as well as in *Henry IV.*, Sir John Oldcastle was originally one of the characters. This name was adopted from the old Queen's play of *The Famous Victories of Henry V.*, from which the main plot of Shakespeare's *Henry V.* series was taken, and certainly was not intended to give offence to the Cobhams,

his descendants. They took offence, however, and the name was altered to that of Sir John Falstaff, taken from another Queen's play, *1 Henry VI.*, which I have already noticed, and which, with the addition of the scene of the Temple Garden, was acted by the Chamberlain's company.

Between August and October, the Theater having become ruinous, and litigation between James Burbadge, its lessee, and Giles Alleyn, the ground landlord, being imminent, the Chamberlain's company removed to the Curtain. The Earl of Pembroke's company, who have for controversial purposes been unjustifiably confused with the Chamberlain's, in August acted as strollers at Rye, in September at Dover, and on their return to London amalgamated with the Admiral's, and acted at the Rose. Among the plays acted by Shakespeare's company at the Curtain was *Romeo and Juliet*, as appears from a singular allusion in Marston's *Satires*, which also serves to show that this play then, as now, was one of the most popular of his productions. But his popularity is shown in another way this year. Coincidentally with the removal to the Curtain, we find the first appearance of authorised publication of his plays, *Richard II.* having been entered S. R. on 29th August, and *Richard III.* on 20th October. The *Romeo and Juliet* printed this year was neither entered nor authorised. On 26th December *Love's Labour's Lost* was acted at Court, being one of four plays provided for the Christmas festivities by this company. It was probably specially commanded, and the alterations from the 1589 version, which

were very hurriedly done, were almost certainly made on this occasion.

On 25th February 1598, the first part of *Henry IV.* was printed, and the second part was acted soon after. The popularity of these plays caused a re-issue in this year of the old Queen's play of *The Famous Victories of Henry V.*, brought out in order that the purchaser might imagine he was procuring a copy of Shakespeare's plays. The genuine *Henry IV.*, for this and reasons alluded to above connected with the elimination of Oldcastle's name, was published earlier after its production on the stage than usual. For the same reason this alteration was expressly alluded to in the Epilogue to 2 *Henry IV.*, "Oldcastle is not the man." In this same year *Much Ado about Nothing* (probably a recast of *Love's Labour's Won*) was performed. On 7th September was entered S. R., Meres' *Wit's Treasury*, which contains, among many encomiums of Shakespeare, a list of twelve of his plays. This tract was demonstrably not written till June, and the plays are manifestly those that had been produced by Shakespeare during the existence of the Chamberlain's company. These are: *Gentlemen of Verona* (1595), *Errors* (1594), *Love's Labour's Lost* (1597), *Love's Labour's Won* (1598), *Midsummer Night's Dream* (1595), and *Merchant of Venice* (1597); *Richard II.* (1595), *Richard III.* (1594), *Henry IV.* (1597), *King John* (1596), *Titus Andronicus* (1594), and *Romeo and Juliet* (1596). Plays produced before or in 1594 that had not been recast after that year are not mentioned; for instance, *1 Henry VI.* (1592),

Troilus and Cressida (1593), *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (1592), and *Edward III.* (1594). This list is of the highest value, when rightly understood, in determining the order of production of the plays. Another event, important to the welfare of the Chamberlain's company, was the introduction of Ben Jonson as a play-writer for their stage. This took place in September, and there is no reason for doubting the tradition that he was introduced to them by Shakespeare, who acted in *Every Man in his Humour*, as it was published in the Quarto, before the end of the year. The fact that the Chamberlain's men acted three plays at Court during the Christmas festivities, closes the theatrical record for 1598, but one or two other details remain to be noticed. The establishment of peace on May 2 by the treaty of Vervins, compared with *Sonnet 107*, "olives of endless age," fixes the conclusion of these effusions as about this time, and Southampton's marriage at the end of the year precluded the need of their continuance. They probably were finished before Meres' mention of them in *Wit's Treasury* (written c. July) as Shakespeare's "sugared sonnets among his private friends." Little details of evidence are also extant, showing that since his purchase of New Place, Shakespeare's residence was partly in the country. On 4th February he appears as third largest owner of corn in his ward at Stratford, and in October we find him procuring a loan of £30 in London, for his friend and countryman Richard Quiney. His London residence at this time was in St. Helen's, Bishopsgate; but still earlier than this, on 24th January,

he was in negotiation about the purchase of some thirty acres of land at Shottery, and Abraham Sturley wrote from Stratford to his brother-in-law, the same Richard Quiney, urging him to suggest to Shakespeare the purchase of the corporation tithe-lease; it "would advance him indeed, and would do us much good," says Sturley.

In January 1598-9 James Burbadge brought his dispute with Giles Alleyn about the Theater to a practical conclusion by removing the materials of that structure from Shoreditch to the Bankside, and erecting the Globe with them. This "round" was opened in the spring, and in it all the plays of Shakespeare not hitherto noticed were originally produced. Before quitting the Curtain, however, *A Warning for Fair Women* was there acted by the Chamberlain's men. This was in my opinion Lodge's last play. Another play of the same date was Shakespeare's *Henry V.*, reproduced, with additions and alterations, at the Globe in the autumn of the same year. Other Globe plays of this year were *As You Like It*, and Jonson's *Every Man out of his Humour*. This latter was the first of his comical satires, in which he introduces on the stage Marston, Dekker, Monday, the Globe players, &c. Only this one was acted by Shakespeare's company, and it is specially remarkable that Shakespeare did not take a part in it, although he had acted in *Every Man in his Humour* in 1598. It is pretty clear that he disliked Jonson's personalities, and it is certain that Jonson had to remove them from the Globe Theatre to the Blackfriars, where the Children of the Revels acted under

Evans *The Case is Altered* (1599), *Cynthia's Revels* (1600), and *The Poetaster* (1601). Chapman supported Johnson with *Sir Giles Goosecap* (1601). The Paul's Children retaliated with Marston's *Jack Drum's Entertainment* (1600), and *Antonio and Mellida* (1600); the Admiral's at the Rose with Marston's *Histriomastix*, and *Patient Grissel* by Dekker, Haughton, and Chettle (December 1599); and the Chamberlain's with Dekker's *Satiromastix* (1601). All these plays, and the list is not exhaustive, are filled with personal allusions. The quarrel was known as the "War of the theatres." The prevalent dislike to regard Shakespeare as less than angelic has prevented due attention being given to the direct statement in *The Return from Parnassus* (acted 1602-3) that he had put down all the playwrights of the University press and administered a purge to Jonson in return for the emetic which he administers to Marston in *The Poetaster*. Shakespeare certainly did take part in this controversy, and it is in the plays dating 1599-1602 that we must look for his contributions to it. One thing, however, is certain, that he did not act as a violent partisan. If he purged Jonson he did not spare Dekker, who had written for his own company in this quarrel; "when rank Thersites opes his Mastick jaws" (*Troylus*, i. 3) identifies him clearly enough. In fact, when the Globe company wanted a thorough party advocate in this matter it was not to Shakespeare that they applied. They took the very unusual course of hiring a poet from a rival company, and hence Dekker's *Satiromastix* was written for them. I venture to add that this would not have been allowed by

Shakespeare had he been in London at the time, and that it had to be transferred to the sole use of the Paul's children, probably at his instance. Recurring to *Every Man out of his Humour*, the beginning of all this strife, a comparison of the actor list with that of Jonson's preceding play shows that Kempe, Beeston, and others had left the Chamberlain's company on the opening of the Globe. They no doubt remained at the Curtain, where a company called Lord Derby's soon began to act. This secession did not injure the Globe men, who became very popular. In October, for instance, we hear of Lord Southampton going to plays every day, of course at his old player *protégé's* house. But that some serious quarrel had taken place is, I think, evident from the exclusion of so important a name as Beeston's from the list of chief actors in the first Folio edition of Shakespeare. Duke, Pallant, &c., who seceded at the same time with Beeston, are equally excluded, so that the omission is not accidental.

In this year a perfect edition of *Romeo and Juliet* was published, probably on leaving the Curtain; and *The Passionate Pilgrim* was impudently issued by W. Jaggard as by William Shakespeare. Beyond two sonnets and a few lines from *Love's Labour's Lost*, published in 1598, there is nothing in this book that can be shown to be Shakespeare's, but much that cannot. Somewhere about this date an unsuccessful application was made to impale the arms of Shakespeare with those of Arden. The Chamberlain's men performed three plays at Court during the Christmas festivities, viz.: on 26th December, probably *As You*

Like It; 5th January, probably *Henry V.*; and another play on 4th February. I think this was the occasion for which *The Merry Wives of Windsor* was written, or rather rewritten on the foundation of *The Jealous Comedy* of 1592. The Queen, whose admiration for the character of Falstaff is well known, was sorely disappointed that Shakespeare had not fulfilled his promise made in the Epilogue to *2 Henry IV.*, that he would again introduce him on the stage; and there is no reason to doubt the tradition that, wishing to see him under new conditions, she ordered Shakespeare to represent him in love, which order he obeyed by writing *The Merry Wives* within a fortnight. The dates all suit this hypothesis, and in any case there can be no doubt that this comedy stands apart from the *Henry V.* histories, and was last in point of time. Another play of this year was *Julius Cæsar*. There is no evidence of any other writer than Shakespeare for the company this year, in which the *2* and *3 Henry VI.* (alluded to as recast in Jonson's Prologue to his revised version of *Every Man in his Humour*, acted by the Chapel children early in 1601) were revised and partly rewritten by him. As usual in such cases, the old abridged acting copies of the plays in their earlier shape were reprinted. But there is more interesting matter connected with the publishers in the 1600 entries. On August 4, *As You Like It*, *Henry V.*, *Much Ado about Nothing*, and *Every Man in his Humour*, all Chamberlain's plays, were ordered to be "stayed;" they were probably suspected of being libellous, and reserved for further examination. Since the "war of the theatres" was at

its height, they may have been restrained as not having obtained the consent of the Chamberlain, on behalf of his company, to their publication. Subsequently, *Every Man in his Humour* was licensed on 14th August, but not printed till 1601. *Much Ado* was also licensed 23d August, and printed; *As You Like It* was not allowed to appear, the company probably objecting that it had only been on the stage for one year, but *Henry V.* was printed surreptitiously by T. Millington and T. Busby before 14th August, on which date it appears in S. R. as the property of T. Pavier, who reprinted it in 1602. The peculiarity of this Quarto issue is, that it contains no matter which does not also appear in the complete Folio version, whereas, in the somewhat similar cases of *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Merry Wives*, and *Hamlet*, there is in every instance some portion of the Quarto which is palpably by another hand. This agrees with my view that these three plays, as in the Folio, were founded on earlier plays, in which Shakespeare was at most a coadjutor, while the Folio *Henry V.* is a revision of his own play, produced not long before. Another entry in S. R. is interesting. On October 28, *The Merchant of Venice* was entered to T. Hayes, with Pavier's consent; Roberts had already entered it 22d July 1598, but it had not been allowed to appear, probably because, like those mentioned above, it had then been only one year on the stage. On October 8, *Midsummer Night's Dream* was also entered. Of the editions of these two plays published in this year information will be found in another part of this book. On 11th August the two plays on *Sir John Oldcastle*, of which only

one has reached us, were entered. They had been acted in 1599 at the Rose by the Admiral's men, and were directed against the presumed scandal thrown on the "martyr" in Shakespeare's Henry V. series. It should be especially noted that the principal author of these plays was Drayton, formerly fellow-worker with Shakespeare for the Chamberlain's men, and introducer of *Sir John Oldcastle* as a profligate parson in *The Merry Devil of Edmonton*. Of Shakespeare's personal movements during this year we merely know that he was in London in April recovering a debt of £7 of one Clayton, and no doubt acting in the three plays performed at Court in the winter.

In March 1601 the Chamberlain's company were in disgrace for having publicly acted "the outdated play of *Richard II.*," no doubt inclusive of the deposition scene (which had been omitted in the published copies, under the censorship of the Master of the Revels), for the entertainment of the Essex conspirators. They consequently "travelled," having previously produced Shakespeare's *All's Well that Ends Well*, a considerable portion of which is of much earlier date (c. 1592), but which, in the Parolles scenes, has distinct allusion to Marston's *Jack Drum's Entertainment* of the preceding year, and to the "war of the theatres," not yet concluded. They also acted the play of *Cromwell*, Earl of Essex, by W. S., in which the parallel between the careers of Cromwell and the lately executed Earl is strongly brought out. I believe W. S. to have been William Sly, the well-known actor of the Chamberlain's company. In

their travels this year the company visited the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, where they performed *Julius Cæsar* and *Hamlet*. The version of this last play so acted was not the old play by Kyd, but one hurriedly remodelled by Shakespeare, which we possess in an imperfect form in the first Quarto. Among the Shakespearian additions occur passages alluding to the theatrical war and the popularity of the Chapel Children, to which the travelling of the company is attributed. This proves that Shakespeare was one of the strolling detachment. Jonson seized on this defence in his *Poetaster*, and represented that the travelling was due to the inefficiency of their play-writers, and makes Tucca tell Histrio, the Globe player, that if they will employ Marston, who "pens high lofty in a new stalking strain," they "shall not need to travel with thy pumps full of gravel after a blind jade and a hamper, and stalk upon boards and barrel-heads to an old cracked trumpet." The travels, however, were not confined to England. In October they had reached Aberdeen, where they received the title of "the King's Servants," and Laurence Fletcher, their manager, was admitted burgess of guild of the borough. In all probability a version of the old *Macbeth* play was produced before King James – such a version as that of *Hamlet* acted at the Universities. Its plot would fit more aptly with the circumstances of the Gowry conspiracy of 1600 than that of *Richard II.* would with Essex, and anything more pleasing to the King and people of Scotland could not have been selected. During the absence of this strolling detachment

Jonson's *Poetaster* was produced, containing a vigorous attack on the Globe company; and they, in Shakespeare's absence, hired Dekker to reply in his *Satiromastix*, which, with the aid of the Paul's children, they represented in the public theatre of the Globe, and in the private convocation-room of Paul's. During this same absence, on 8th September Shakespeare's father was buried at Stratford. He apparently died intestate. After the return from Scotland, the appearance of Shakespeare's name, as fellow-contributor to Chester's *Love's Martyr* with Jonson, Marston, and Chapman, marks the conclusion of the theatrical quarrel, and the reconciliation of all the principal combatants, except Dekker. But although this book bears the date 1601, it could not, I think, have been issued earlier than March 1601-2, after the production of *Twelfth Night* on February 2 at the Middle Temple. Such presentations as this at Inns of Court were usually of new plays; and there is in this play fairly conclusive internal evidence that the theatrical quarrel was not over when it was acted. With regard to Shakespeare's other play of this year, *Troilus and Cressida*, it was as clearly produced after the reconciliation. The entry in S. R., "as it *is* acted by the Lord Chamberlain's men," is absolutely conclusive that it was still on the stage on 1st February 1602-3, and was therefore produced, in all probability, in the later half of 1602. In this play the Prologue, the love story of Troilus, and all the scenes after v. 4, are taken from the old play of c. 1593, in which Shakespeare only wrote as a coadjutor. The Prologue and the later scenes – v. 5-10 – are manifestly by the second pen in

the main, and printed by mistake, the end of the revised version being shown by the repetition of the lines "Why, but hear you," &c., at the end of v. 3. That the 1602 version of the play was intended to refer to the theatrical quarrel of 1599-1602 is clear from the line "*Rank* Thersites with his *mastick* tooth," who is evidently Dekker, of whom Jonson says in the *Poetaster* (iii. 1), "He has one of the most overflowing *rank* wits in Rome; he will slander any man that breathes if he disgust him." Dekker had produced the *SatiroMASTIX* shortly before *Troylus* was acted; and it has been noted that he was not one of the contributors to Chester's *Martyr*. I believe the *Troylus* play to have been the one in which Shakespeare put down all the University men, and purged Ben Jonson's pride, as we learn that he did from the University play of *The Return from Parnassus*, acted in January 1602-3; the character of Ajax, "*Slow* as the elephant, into whom nature hath so crowded *humours*," &c. (i. 2), hits off Jonson exactly, and is a good-humoured reply to Jonson's self-estimate as Crites in *Cynthia's Revels* (ii. 1), "A creature of a most divine temper, one in whom the elements and *humours* are peaceably met," &c.

In May 1602 Gilbert Shakespeare (his brother being probably in London) concluded the purchase on his behalf of 107 acres of land in Old Stratford, bought of the Coombes for £320, and on 28th September Walter Getley transferred to him (not in person), at a Court Baron of the Manor of Rowington, a cottage and garden in Chapel Lane. The lady of the manor

retained possession until personal completion of the purchase. The Chamberlain's company were re-admitted to act at Court in the winter, not having performed there in 1601-2, probably on account of the *Richard II.* affair. They acted, however, only two plays. In the following March, 1603, Shakespeare remodelled *The Taming of the Shrew* by the rewriting of the Katherine and Petruchio scene. The play before he altered it was one written, I think, by Lodge about 1596, and founded on the old Kyd play of 1589 acted by Pembroke's men. On March 29 Queen Elizabeth died, and whether it be due to the different requirements of the new Court, or to a natural development of Shakespeare's mind, there can be no doubt that a marked change of style and method took place at this epoch in his work. It should not be forgotten that the primary object for which theatres were established was that stage-players "might be the better enabled and prepared to show such plays to her [or his] Majesty as they shall be required," and that the "honest recreation" of the citizens was a secondary matter. For proof of this see the Privy Council documents quoted by Collier in his *Annals, passim*, and specially in i. 309. Hence the succession of a new sovereign had greater influence on the tone of the drama than we can well realise. In Shakespeare's case it inaugurated a period in which Tragedy was predominant in place of Comedy and History. All his greatest tragedies were produced during the next four years 1603-6.

Before quitting the reign of Elizabeth, I call attention to the significant fact that the Chamberlain's company performed at

Court before the accession of James exactly twenty-eight plays, and that the number of Shakespeare's plays known to have been produced during the same period by that company is twenty, and of other men's eight. I do not press this exact agreement as showing absolute identity between the two lists; one or two of the Court plays may have been merely revivals, one or two of the stage plays may not have been brought before her Majesty at all, but I think the following inferences justifiable. The Queen, evidently as a general rule, only allowed new plays, or plays so largely reconstructed as to be reckoned as new, to be presented to her. So far as the Chamberlain's company were concerned, these plays consisted on an average of two of Shakespeare's and one of another author's – these numbers, however, being rather exceeded in the earlier years, and diminished in the later. Shakespeare consequently was to this company in the same position as Greene to the Queen's men before his time, purveying to their use "more than four other," which explains his rapid advance in popularity and accumulation of property. And finally, the number of plays supposed to have been lost has been grossly exaggerated by modern critics, who have based their calculations on the Diary of Henslowe, whose policy was quantity rather than quality, and who was continually deceived by his hack-writers presenting to his illiterate ignorance old plays new vamped as if they were completely new.

In 1603 the plague raged in London. In March before the Queen's death, the theatres were closed, and in the license of

May 19, which adopted the Chamberlain's men as the King's Servants (a title already conferred on them in Scotland in 1601), a special clause was inserted allowing them to act "when the infection of the plague shall decrease." The infection did not decrease, yet the theatres were reopened, but probably only for a few days. Doubtless the authorities closed them on account of the continuance of the sickness. The plays acted at this reopening were probably *The Miseries of Enforced Marriage*, by George Wilkins, a new author, which was founded on contemporaneous events in Yorkshire, and certainly the perfected *Hamlet* as we now have it in the Folio. The older version, which had been entered S. R. on 26th July 1602, was now published, having probably been "stayed," as was frequently the case with plays printed by J. Roberts (for example *The Merchant of Venice*, *Troilus and Cressida*), but not till the copyright had been transferred to N. Ling and J. Trundell. In 1604 Ling issued the second Quarto, which in some instances supplies passages omitted in the Folio for stage purposes, and in others presents alternative versions and additions evidently made for the Court performance (one of nine) in the winter 1603-4. It was a common practice to utilise the altered copies of plays acted at Court by allowing their publication. Yet another play acted by the King's men this year was Jonson's *Sejanus*, for which he was accused of Popery and treason by Northampton. When he published it (2d November 1604, S. R.), he stated that "this book in all numbers is not the same with that which was acted on the public stage;

wherein a second pen had good share: in place of which I have rather chosen to put weaker, and no doubt less pleasing of mine own, than to defraud so happy a genius of his right by my loathed usurpation." The only known writers for the King's men at this date were Wilkins, W. S. (? Sly), Shakespeare, and possibly Tourneur. Of these there can be no doubt that Shakespeare is the only one that could have been the second pen alluded to. Not that necessarily he was a coadjutor to Jonson in this play. It is more likely that as he acted one of the principal parts in it he inserted or altered scenes in which he himself appeared. It is clear that "the second pen," whoever he was, objected to his share in the play being published, and no wonder, seeing how its main author had been accused on account of it. This probably explains why the book was kept in the press six months, from November 1604 to April 1605. When it was issued Jonson's *Volpone* was just coming on the stage, and it is noticeable that Shakespeare did not act in that play, and that immediately after Jonson quitted the King's men and joined Chapman and Marston in writing *Eastward Ho* for the Revels children, in which *Hamlet* is ridiculed. All this seems to point to a quarrel between Jonson and Shakespeare, and certainly Jonson's behaviour in the Sejanus matter is not, as Gifford calls it, manly. To drag in unnecessarily an allusion to a friend whose personality must have been known to the public of that time, into an address prefixed to a work accused of Popery and sedition was unmanly; and, as his friend had objected to it, was discreditable. No intercourse can be

shown between Shakespeare and Jonson after 1603.

On 30th January 1603-4, the new company of the Revels children replaced the Chapel boys at Blackfriars. They were, however, in the main composed of the same actors, and were not unfrequently mentioned under their old name. On March 15, we find that among the King's train, at his entry into London, were nine of the King's company, dressed in the scarlet cloth allowed for the occasion. As these nine are identical with those in the license of 19th May 1603, which is statedly incomplete, they must have been in some way distinguished from the rest of their fellows. They were, no doubt, shareholders in the Globe. Cooke and Lowin, who acted in *Sejanus* and *Volpone*, do not appear among them; nor do Tooley, Gough, and Sinkler, who were at this time members of the company. The nine were Shakespeare, Phillips, Fletcher, Hemings, Burbadge, Sly, Lowin, Condell, and Cowley. In July, Shakespeare was in Stratford, recovering in the local court some £2 odd for malt, &c., sold to one Rogers. In August he was summoned to London, the King's men having to attend at Somerset House to play at the reception of the Spanish ambassador. During this year he produced *Othello* and *Measure for Measure*, which were acted at Court in the winter festivities, along with five old plays of his, and two of Jonson's. *Hamlet* does not occur in this list, as it undoubtedly would have done if produced in 1604. It was, in fact, published this year as it had been acted at Court in the previous winter. Another play acted by the King's men was Marston's *Malcontent*, with an Induction

by Webster, in which the reason of its appearance is explained. The Blackfriars children had acted *Jeronymo* in 1600, an old play of Kyd's, which had passed to the King's men from Lord Strange's, by whom it had been purchased of the Queen's. It had probably been taken from the Chamberlain's men to the Chapel children by Jonson, who in 1601, September 25, transferred it to the Admiral's, and wrote additions to it for Henslowe. This appropriation of their property irritated the Globe players, and when they got the chance, at the reconstitution of the Blackfriars children in 1604, they procured *The Malcontent*, which had been acted by these pigmies, and produced it on their own stage as "one for another." They also in December acted "the tragedy of Gowry with all action and actors," so Chamberlain writes to Winwood, December 18, "with exceeding concourse of all sorts of people," but he adds, "some great councillors are much displeas'd with it, and so 'tis thought it shall be forbidden." It probably was forbidden, as the play has disappeared. Another mysterious play is *The Spanish Maz*, said to have been one of the eleven performed in the winter at Court. Nothing is known of such a play; but much is known of forgery connected with such statements.

In 1605, the tragedy of *King Lear* was acted about 7th May, when the old *Leir*, on which it was founded, but which was a *comedy*, was entered S. R. as a "*Tragical History*" of Leir, &c., "as it was lately acted." Another play of very dubious authorship was acted by the King's men before 3d July, when the ballad

on the same events was entered S. R.; this was *The Yorkshire Tragedy*. It was a continuation of the story of *The Miseries of Enforced Marriage*, but treated more realistically and more powerfully. It was published 2d May 1608 as by Shakespeare, as in 1605 *The London Prodigal* had already been, but in the latter instance the publication was unlicensed and surreptitious, while the *Yorkshire Tragedy* was entered S. R. as "written by William Shakespeare." The entry, however, was made for T. Pavier, an unscrupulous piratic printer, who on other occasions tried to establish rights in "Shakespeare's plays" which were not Shakespeare's; and no weight can be assigned to his assertions. Another play acted by the King's men, in March 1605, was Jonson's *Volpone*, or *The Fox*. This was anterior in production to the plays already mentioned. Immediately afterwards we find Jonson in connection with the Blackfriars children again, and in prison for writing *Eastward Ho*. Shakespeare did not act in *The Fox*; perhaps Jonson was offended at this; he at any rate did not return to the King's men till 1610. On 4th May, Phillips, Shakespeare's fellow-actor, made his will, and died shortly after. We learn from this document, which gives us many other valuable particulars respecting the members of the company, that Shakespeare and Condell were the two of "his fellows" whom, next to Hemings, Burbadge, and Sly, his executors, Phillips most highly appreciated; he left them each a 30s. – piece in gold, but to Fletcher, Armin, Cowley, Cooke, and Tooley a 20s. – piece. He also left legacies to Gilburne and Sands his apprentices, and

to Beeston his servant. "His fellows" here means the shareholders in the Globe, as contrasted with the "hired servants," to whom he left "£5 amongst them." There were then in 1605 eleven shareholders, Cooke and Tooley having been added since 15th March 1604. On 24th July Shakespeare invested £40 in a lease of the tithes of Stratford, Old Stratford, Bishopton, and Welcombe, as had been suggested to him in 1598. In August King James was at Oxford, and among the entertainments presented to him were speeches by three young men of St. John's, who personated the three Sibyls who had prophesied to Banquo. This interlude would necessarily recall to the King's mind the old Macbeth play, which had been probably presented to him in Scotland by the Globe players, and if, as there is little reason to doubt, he did write an autograph letter to Shakespeare, it was most likely on this occasion, commanding a fuller version of *Macbeth*. This play was certainly produced at Court, probably at Shrovetide in March 1605-6, but it has been altered since, condensed and interpolated by dances and songs and a new scene with Hecate in it, no doubt by Middleton in 1622, from whose *Witch* the songs are taken. On 9th October the Globe company acted before the Mayor and Corporation at Oxford, and then, if not from the King, Shakespeare would be sure to hear of the Sybils interlude. In all, ten plays were acted at Court this winter by the Globe company. Among them was a version of *Mucedorus*, with additions. This version has only come down to us in imprints of 1610 and later; but there was an edition in 1606 mentioned in Beauclerc's

Catalogue, 1781, from which the later title-pages were copied. From the title it appears that it had been revived before the King on Shrove-Sunday night at Whitehall. The original play had been acted about the city, and therefore not later than 1594, before the Chamberlain's men settled at the Theater. The additions are directed against Jonson, whose strictures on monopolies, and sneer at "the miraculous effects of the Oglío del Scoto" in *Volpone*, ii. 1, must have grievously offended James, who had revived the touching for the king's evil. Jonson had subsequently joined Chapman and Marston in writing *Eastward Ho* for the Chapel boys, in which the Scots were still more severely satirised, and was evidently, as may be seen from the address prefixed to *Volpone*, at daggers drawn with the Globe men. Hence, in the *Mucedorus* additions, the allusions to the "meagre cannibal," the "scrambling raven with his meagre beard" (certainly Jonson, the "thin-bearded Hermaphrodite" in *Satiromastix*), who had, stirred up by Envy, written a comedy for the Globe filled with "dark sentences pleasing to factious brains;" which would have led to their restraint, as *Eastward Ho* did for the Chapel boys, had not the King's players been staid and discreet, and begged pardon of His Majesty on bended knee "for their unwilling error." The threatened information must have been in the autumn of 1605.

To 1606 no other play than *Macbeth* can with certainty be traced: and the marked change of metrical style at this epoch points to a period of rest. In all his subsequent plays, many lines end with unemphatic words, such as *and*, *if*, *which*, *but*

and the like, and this change was not introduced gradually but suddenly and decisively. Hence its value as indisputably separating the Fourth Period plays from the preceding. On this ground it is pretty certain that *Timon* was Shakespeare's next production; he only wrote the chief scenes in it, however, and it was finished for the stage by another hand. At this time also, in my opinion, Shakespeare began to write *Cymbeline*, which he afterwards completed himself. This arrangement of his work seems natural; *Lear*, *Macbeth*, *Cymbeline* closing the series founded on Holinshed, and *Timon*, *Antony*, *Coriolanus*— the series from Plutarch — succeeding them. A minuter examination of the question will be found in a later part of this work. Of other play-writers' contributions to the Globe in 1606 there is only one — *Pericles*, as originally produced by Wilkins, which was ridiculed in *The Puritan* by Middleton — acted by the Paul's children of this year. Wilkins left writing for the King's men, and (1607) joined the Queen's men at the Curtain. This was probably rumoured to have been caused by some quarrel with Shakespeare, for on 6th August 1607, S. R., *The Puritan Widow* was published as by W. S., evidently meaning William Shakespeare. Of all the instances in which Shakespeare's name or initials were fraudulently inserted on title-pages, this play and *Sir John Oldcastle* were the only two in which they were prefixed to plays not even acted by his company. At the Court in the 1606-7 season three Globe plays were presented to the King of Denmark on the occasion of his visit to England, and nine others in the

usual course. *Antony and Cleopatra* may be confidently assigned to 1607. It was entered for publication S. R. on 20th May 1608 with *Pericles* (no doubt as originally written by Wilkins), but both plays were stayed; the former as having been on the stage only one year, the latter to be superseded by the issue in 1609 of the version as altered by Shakespeare. On 22d October *The Merry Devil of Edmonton* was entered S. R. for A. Johnson. The entry for Hunt and Archer on 5th April 1608 is that of the prose story by Thomas Brewer. The initials T. B. in this latter entry have misled Mr. Halliwell and others to assign the authorship of the play to Tony Brewer. On 26th November Shakespeare's *King Lear* was entered S. R. as it was played before the King on 26th December 1606, "Saint Stephen's Night at Christmas last." This settles two important questions; first, the relation of the Quarto text to the Folio – the Quarto being the version played at Court, the Folio that retained by the players for the public stage; secondly, the existence of a custom in the Globe company of allowing, in cases of altered or revised plays, the version not required for future stage purposes to be issued to the public in print. Many instances of this custom are brought to light in the present treatise. On October 7, Cyril Tourneur's (?) *Revenger's Tragedy* was entered S. R. The date of production on the stage is uncertain. It had "been sundry times acted by the King's players." Nor am I aware of the grounds on which the authorship is assigned to Tourneur. It was published anonymously. On 25th June, Susanna, Shakespeare's daughter, married John Hall,

M.A., physician at Stratford. There were thirteen performances this winter at Court by the King's men. In 1608 Shakespeare probably produced *Coriolanus*. On 21st February Elizabeth Hall was baptized, within eight months from her parents' marriage. The prospect of a continuation of his family, though not of his family name, was some alleviation for Shakespeare of the loss of his youngest brother Edmund, "a player," buried at St. Saviour's, Southwark, 31st December 1607, "with a forenoon knell of the great bell," *ætatis* 27. Of Edmund's career in London we *know* nothing; but surely he must have belonged to the Globe company. His absence from the actors' lists offers no obstacle to this supposition; they are, after that of *The Seven Deadly Sins* in 1594, confined to names of shareholders and principal actors. And if player for the Globe, why not author? May he not, for instance, have written *The Yorkshire Tragedy* under his brother's superintendence, and may not this account for its being published as William Shakespeare's? All attempts to assign it to any known author have egregiously failed. However this may be, and however poignantly William felt the loss of the Benjamin of the family, a severer bereavement awaited him in the death of his mother, buried at Stratford 9th September 1608. It has always been a favourite hypothesis with me that Volumnia was drawn from her as a model of matronly virtue, and it is certain that at this date a final change took place in Shakespeare's manner of writing. His plays since the accession of James had been, with scarcely an exception, tragedies; from this time they

are really, under whatever head they may have hitherto been classed, tragi-comedies, and all turn, as I pointed out many years ago, on the reuniting of separated members of families. The first of this final group is *Marina*, the part of *Pericles* which replaced Wilkins' work, and which was written in this winter and hurriedly printed in 1609 as a practical answer to Wilkins' prose version, published in 1608, in which he claimed the story as an "infant of his brain." Shakespeare's version must, I think, be placed after his return to London from Stratford, where he remained after his mother's funeral till 16th October, when he stood godfather for William Walker. The Court performances this winter were twelve. On 28th January 1609, *Troilus and Cressida* was entered S. R., not for Roberts, whose intended publication in 1603 had been stayed, but for Bonian and Whalley, who issued it with a preface stating that it had never been "staled with the stage." This false statement was withdrawn in their subsequent re-issue during the same year, but it proves that the period during which the play had been performed in 1602 must have been a very short one; such a statement could not have otherwise been put forward with any plausibility. On 20th May the *Sonnets* were published, with a dedication to their "only begetter," Mr. W. H. I think that these initials designate Sir William Hervey, to whom Lord Southampton's mother left at her death in November 1607 the greatest part "of her stuff." He was her third husband, and may have been the original suggester to Shakespeare, as a friend to Lord Southampton, that he should

write a series of Sonnets to him recommending marriage in 1594, when Southampton had not yet become devoted to "the fair Mrs. Vernon," and was entangled in the affair of the frail Avisia. In 1609 he was busily occupied with the Virginian company, and promoting voyages for American discovery, an allusion to which underlies the Dedication "wisheth the well-wishing adventurer in setting forth," *adventurer* being the current phrase for explorer of unknown regions. On 7th June Shakespeare's cousin, Thomas Green, then residing at New Place, Stratford, issued a final precept in his behalf against one Hornby, who had become bail for John Addenbroke, in a matter of debt for £6. This litigation had begun in August 1608: juries had been summoned on 21st December and 15th February, and then Addenbroke absconded, leaving Hornby to be answerable. The plague being prevalent this year, there were no Christmas performances at Court, and not many on the public stage. *Cymbeline* was Shakespeare's only production. In its present state it has evidently been subjected to revision and to alteration for some revival after Shakespeare's death, when the doggerel in the vision in iv. 4 was inserted; originally, no doubt, the ghosts appeared in dumb show to music. The Globe players received £30 as a compensation for being restrained from playing in London during six weeks, *i. e.*, during August and September, when the bills of mortality show the plague to have been at its height.

In January 1610 the Revels children left the Blackfriars Theatre, and set up with a new organisation under Rossiter at

Whitefriars the new private stage. It appears from the statement of C. Burbadge, in the 1635 documents discovered by Mr. Halliwell, that that family then bought up the remainder of the lease from Evans, and took some of the Revels boys, now grown up, to strengthen the Globe company. Among these were Underwood and Ostler; but as C. Burbadge also names Field, who did not join the King's men till 1615 or 1616, his subsequent statement that they set up men-players, Shakespeare, Hemings, Condell, &c., in Blackfriars *at that date*, is not to be taken as necessarily exact. The King's men undoubtedly took possession of Blackfriars for their own performances in 1614 or 1615, after the Globe had been burned and rebuilt; but there is not a trace of them until then in connection with this private house except this *ex parte* statement of C. Burbadge, made for a special purpose, in a plea which is studiously ambiguous. But there is evidence that other companies acted there. Field's *Amends for Ladies* was performed there by the Lady Elizabeth's company and the Duke of York's (afterwards Prince Charles'). This performance must have taken place during a temporary union between the Prince's men and the Lady Elizabeth's, to which latter the play and its author were properly attached; but that the Duke of York's acted continuously at Blackfriars from 1610 to 1615, is very probable. It is not likely that a company under such patronage, and admitted to Court performances every Christmas, should have been merely a strolling company, and there was no other theatre for them to perform in. The King's men held the Globe, Prince

Henry's (afterwards the Palgrave's) the Fortune, the Queen's the Bull and the Curtain, the Queen's Revels' boys Whitefriars, and Lady Elizabeth's at first the Swan till 1612, and after its abandonment the newly renovated Hope in 1614, and then the rebuilt Cockpit or Phoenix. There is no proof that Shakespeare ever acted at Blackfriars; there is strong presumption to the contrary as to his supposed shares in that theatre: it was the "private inheritance" of the Burbages, and that the King's men had shares in it at this time rests on the evidence of forged documents and mischievously fertile imaginations, to which the purchase of twenty acres of land at Stratford by Shakespeare from the Combes in June seems to require access of capital to make this new acquisition feasible. *Winter's Tale* was certainly produced early this year, before Jonson's *Alchemist*, which was acted and entered S. R., October 3, but was, however, "stayed" for the usual reasons, and did not get published till 1612. The Address to the Reader (no doubt dating 1610) contains one of Jonson's numerous allusions to the "dance of antics" in *Winters Tale*. Jonson, who had produced *Epicene* for the Chapel children in 1609, had returned to the King's men when the boys left Blackfriars. Shakespeare's last play this year, and final finished contribution to the stage, was *The Tempest*, produced about November, after the news that the ships of Sir T. Gates at the Bermudas had not been destroyed. This play as we have it has unfortunately been abridged for Court performances, probably by Beaumont in 1612 or 1613, to whom the insertion of the

Masque may confidently be attributed. There were fifteen winter performances at Court in 1610-11.

The loss of Shakespeare was repaired as well as circumstances would permit by the accession of Beaumont and Fletcher to the King's company in 1611. In that year they produced their masterpieces *Philaster, a King and no King* and *The Maid's Tragedy*: in 1612 *The Woman's Prize* (by Fletcher alone), the play of *Cardenas* (probably the original form of *Love's Pilgrimage*), and *The Captain*. Jonson contributed *Catiline* in 1611, and Webster *The Duchess of Malfi* in 1612. *The Second Maiden's Tragedy* (by the author of *The Revenger's Tragedy*, I think) was also produced in 1611. At Court the unusual number of twenty-two plays was acted in the 1611 winter and twenty-eight in 1612. These must have included nearly every play they possessed; and the fact that the whole, or nearly so, of Shakespeare's plays were revived at Court in these two years makes his retirement in 1610 to my mind nearly a certainty, and accounts for the not very felicitous praise of his "copious industry" by Webster in the Dedication of his *White Devil* in 1612. Webster couples the retired Shakespeare with Dekker and Heywood: but Jonson's works he speaks of as "laboured and understanding," Beaumont's and Fletcher's as "no less worthy composures." This higher praise is given to the writers who like himself were then contributing to the Globe repertory. He mentions no one else but Chapman of "full and heightened style." Are we to attribute to this mention of him the tradition

that Chapman wrote *The Second Maiden's Tragedy*? On 11th September 1611 Shakespeare's name occurs "in the margin, as if a later insertion" (says Mr. Halliwell) of a list of Stratford donors "towards the charge of prosecuting the bill in Parliament for the better repair of the highways." In 1612 Lane, Greene, and Shakespeare filed a bill before Lord Ellesmere complaining that some of the lessees of the Stratford tithes refused to contribute their proper shares of a reserved rent. It appears from this document that Shakespeare's income from this source was £60. In the same year Heywood, in his *Apology for Actors*, complained of W. Jaggard's having printed in *The Passionate Pilgrim*, 3d edition, two love epistles taken from his *Troia Britannica*, as by W. Shakespeare, "which might put the world in opinion I might steal them from him;" he adds that he knows the author was much offended for Jaggard's presuming to make bold with his name. The name was in consequence withdrawn *altogether* from the title-page. Notwithstanding this, many modern editors print *The Passionate Pilgrim* as Shakespeare's. On 4th February 1613 Richard Shakespeare was buried at Stratford; whether the Gilbert Shakespeare, "adolescens," who was buried 3d February 1612, was also a brother of William's, is doubtful, but likely. On 10th March 1613 Shakespeare bought of Henry Walker a house and yard near Blackfriars Theatre for £140, of which £60 remained on mortgage (one of the trustees being in 1618 John Heming, Shakespeare's fellow-actor): he leased the house to John Robinson for ten years. On 29th June the Globe was

burned down. It caught fire during the performance of *All is True* (*Henry VIII.*) This was not the play as we have it – which is a later version by Massinger and Fletcher, written for the Blackfriars Theatre, and containing only three scenes that can be attributed to Shakespeare – but a play in which there was a fool's part. Wotton describes it as "the play of *Henry VIII.*," but Lorkin says it was a new play called *All is True*, representing some principal pieces of *Henry VIII.* Whether new play or not it was probably by Shakespeare, written c. 1609, and portions of it remain imbedded in that now extant by Fletcher and Massinger c. 1617, the original MS. having perished in the fire. Just at the same time one Lane had been maligning Mrs. Hall, Shakespeare's daughter, in connection with Ralph Smith. Lane was summoned before the Ecclesiastical Court at Worcester on 15th July and excommunicated on the 27th. There were only seven plays performed at Court by the King's men in the winter 1613-14, all their principal writers – Fletcher, Beaumont, Jonson, Webster – having left them after the Globe fire. Surely this is not consistent with the statement of C. Burbadge that they had taken the Blackfriars building to their own use. No new play can be traced to them till 1615, when the Globe had been² rebuilt, and the Prince Charles' men had gone to the Curtain. Then they certainly did take the Blackfriars to themselves, and with an excellent staff of writers – Jonson, Fletcher, Massinger, and Field – they occupied it as well as the new Globe. A letter of

² It had been reopened in June 1614.

John Chamberlain's to Sir Dudley Carleton, 5th January 1615, says of the stage in general: "Of five new plays there is not one that pleases, and therefore they are driven to furbish over their old." Yet Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair* was one of these 1614 plays acted at Court. I suspect that Lady Elizabeth's players were not so well liked as the King's, and that Shakespeare and Beaumont were greatly missed. Fletcher and Massinger were not yet able to replace them even at Court.

In July 1614 John Combe left a legacy of £5 to Shakespeare; this fact disposes of the silly story of Shakespeare having satirised him in infantile doggerel. In the autumn William Combe, the squire of Wilcombe, originated a proposal to enclose common fields in the neighbourhood; he was supported by Shakespeare, who had been guaranteed against prospective loss by Replingham, Combe's agent. The corporation, through his cousin Greene, the town-clerk, remonstrated with him in November when he was in London, and again in December wrote to him representing the inconveniences and loss that would be caused. The matter dragged on to September 1615, and then fell through. This is the last notice of Shakespeare's action in any public matter. On 10th February 1616 his daughter Judith was married to Thomas Quiney, vintner, four years her junior, without licence, whence a fine and threat of excommunication at the Worcester Ecclesiastical Court: and on 25th April Shakespeare was buried. His will had been executed on 25th March. It was not regularly engrossed, but a corrected

draft, originally prepared for copying and completion on 25th January, but evidently neglected until the sudden emergency of Shakespeare's illness. It appears from this document that Judith's marriage portion was to have been £100, on condition of her husband's settling on her £150 in land; if this condition was fulfilled within three years he was left £150 to his own use, if not it was strictly settled on her and her children. This £150 is independent of £100 in discharge of her marriage portion, and £50 conditional on her surrendering her interest in the Rowington manor to Susanna Hall. To Joan Hart, his sister, whose husband had been buried on 17th April, was left wearing apparel, £20, a life-interest in Henley Street, and £5 each to her sons. To Susanna Hall he left all his real estate settled in tail male, with the usual remainders over. To Elizabeth Hall all his plate except the broad silver-gilt bowl, which went to Judith Quiney. To his fellows, Hemings, Burbadge, and Condell, £1, 6s. 8d. each for rings; the usual legacies to the executors, poor, &c.; and to his wife his second best bed. Of course she was fully provided for by freebench in the Rowington copyhold, and dower on the rest of the property; nevertheless, it is strange that she does not appear as executrix, that she had no life-interest left her in house or furniture, and that in the draft of the will, as made in January, her name does not appear to have been mentioned at all. It is only in the subsequent interlineations that her bequest appears.

SECTION II.

THE PERSONAL CONNECTIONS OF SHAKESPEARE WITH OTHER POETS

One of the objects of the present treatise is to bring into clearer light the relations of Shakespeare with contemporary dramatists. Strangely enough this has scarcely been attempted in earlier biographies. His dealings in malt have been carefully chronicled: his connections with poets have been slurred over. It will be useful, therefore, to gather up the scattered notices of personal contact between him and his fellows in dramatic production. Mere allusions to his works, whether complimentary or otherwise, will not come under this category. Such will be found collected, and well collected, in Dr. Ingleby's *Century of Praise*; but they consist almost entirely of slight references to his published works, and have no bearing of importance on his career. Nor, indeed, have we any extended material of any kind to aid us in this investigation; one source of information, which is abundant for most of his contemporaries, being in his case entirely absent. Neither as addressed to him by others, nor by him to others, do any commendatory verses exist in connection with any of his or other men's works published in his lifetime –

a notable fact, in whatever way it may be explained. Nor can he be traced in any personal contact beyond a very limited circle, although the fanciful might-have-beens so largely indulged in by his biographers might at first lead us to an opposite conclusion.

With John Lyly, the founder of English Comedy, he seems to have had no personal intercourse, although the reproduction by him of many of Lyly's puns and conceits, and some few of his dramatic situations, distinctly prove that he had carefully examined his published plays. Nor does the solitary reference to Shakespeare in Greene's *Groatsworth of Wit*, however it may display strong personal feeling, lead us to suppose that there had been any personal relations between these dramatists; in fact, the very wording of the passage properly understood distinctly disproves the existence of such relations. Of all the dramatists who had preceded him on the London stage the only two with whom he can be even conjecturally brought in personal contact before the opening of the Rose Theatre in 1592 are Robert Wilson and George Peele. It is unlikely that he should have begun his career as a novice and journeyman independent of tutor or coadjutor, and a minute examination of the careers of these two dramatists leads me to infer that they were connected with the same company as Shakespeare in 1590-1. In any case, they were his immediate models in his early work in several respects. It is from Wilson that his liking for doggerel rhymes and alternately rhyming stanzas was derived: it is from Peele that his love tragedy of *Romeo and Juliet*—his only early tragedy

– derived, in its earliest form, as acted in 1591, whatever in it was not Shakespeare's own. Wilson was probably his tutor or coadjutor in Comedy and Peele in Tragedy. But this is after all conjecture; on the other hand, it is certain that in 1592-3 a greater than Peele or Wilson was writing for the same company as Shakespeare, and necessarily in close connection with him. For Marlowe he certainly had a sincere regard: from his poem of *Hero and Leander* Shakespeare makes the only direct quotation to be found in his plays; on his historical plays Shakespeare, after his friend's decease, bestowed in addition, revision, and completion, a greater amount of minute work than on his own; and the earlier of his own histories were distinctly built on lines similar to those of *Edward II.* and *Edward III.* The relation of Shakespeare's Histories to Marlowe's is far more intimate than that of his Comedies or of *Romeo* to any predecessor's productions. I cannot find a trace of direct connection between Shakespeare and any other poet than these mentioned, during the life of Lord Strange. His connection with Lord Southampton seems to have been more intimate than any with his fellow-poets. In the *Sonnets*

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

Текст предоставлен ООО «ЛитРес».

Прочитайте эту книгу целиком, [купив полную легальную версию](#) на ЛитРес.

Безопасно оплатить книгу можно банковской картой Visa, MasterCard, Maestro, со счета мобильного телефона, с платежного терминала, в салоне МТС или Связной, через PayPal, WebMoney, Яндекс.Деньги, QIWI Кошелек, бонусными картами или другим удобным Вам способом.