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Harvard College Library

FROM THE

SUBSCRIPTION FUND

BEGUN IN 1858
THE PLAIN TRUTH
OF
THE STRATFORD-ON-AVON
CONTROVERSY
CONCERNING THE FULLY-INTENDED DEMOLITION
OF OLD HOUSES IN HENLEY STREET, AND THE
CHANGES PROPOSED TO BE EFFECTED ON THE
National Ground of
Shakespeare's Birthplace

BY
MARIE CORELLI

"Fear not my truth; the moral of my wit
Is 'plain and true'."
Shakespeare
Trollus and Cressida

METHUEN & CO.
36 ESSEX STREET W.C.
LONDON
THE PLAIN TRUTH

OF

THE STRATFORD-ON-AVON CONTROVERSY
The New Free Library and Technical Institute, Stratford-on-Avon,
As intended before the Discussion started by Miss Marie Corelli.

Supplement to Stratford-on-Avon Herald,
August 15, 1903.
THE PLAIN TRUTH
OF
THE STRATFORD-ON-AVON
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SHAKESPEARE'S BIRTHPLACE

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"FEAR NOT MY TRUTH; THE MORAL OF MY WIT
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SHAKESPEARE
Troilus and Cressida

METHUEN & CO.
36 ESSEX STREET W.C.
LONDON
1903
Now was the opportunity of their building a custodian's house, and, as they thought, at the same time building an attendant's cottage that would come in for an attendant there or gardener at some future time. The Executive Committee had requested a sub-committee to get out some plans to lay before them. They had not had very much time to elaborate them; in fact it was scarcely desirable to do so before putting the matter before the whole of the Trustees, but if the Trustees thought that the lines they were going upon were such as met with their approval, they wished to have power to carry their plans out. They had requested Mr. Holton to make a few alternative plans, and he had two to submit to them. His idea was that whatever they put up in the garden should be quite subservient to Shakespeare's House, and not over-top it in any way. They should make it as quiet-looking as possible, and not give it the appearance of being a modern villa, or anything that would be incongruous there, but quiet and simple, and upon the old Warwickshire town lines of Shakespeare's time. They had two examples in Stratford, notably the Almshouses and the old Grammar School. There was a particularly good specimen of old English building, which was, unfortunately, pulled down, opposite Shakespeare's House, the old Workhouse, a nice, quiet, old half-timbered building, and he thought if they were to put up something like that, it would be more in keeping.

"The plans were then handed round, after which the Vicar said, with the object of getting on with the business, he moved that the Trustees approve of the action of their sub-committee with regard to the new custodian's and attendant's house, and authorise them to proceed with the work by entering into the necessary contracts. He hoped that would come as the foundation for any discussion that might arise as to the project, and he wished to say that he felt specially glad that the sub-committee had been able, to some extent, to move the position of the house so as to throw additional ground into the garden, because he trusted that the Executive Committee might be able during the coming summer to make some regulations under which the public could be admitted at least occasionally to view the garden. They had there flowers supposed to represent all English flowers mentioned by the Poet, and it seemed to him a very great pity that the garden should be closed when it could be opened, although he quite recognised the fact that on days such as Bank Holidays it would be inexpedient to allow the public in—(Hear, hear).

"The Mayor seconded the motion, and said he thought it a splendid opportunity to improve the appearance of and add to the size of the garden, and to the accommodation of the custodian's house.

"Mr. Smallwood said he did not quite catch the Chairman's remarks, unless they were that Mr. Carnegie's gift was absolutely to the Birthplace Trustees. He hoped it was understood that he was only a critic so far as doing the best they could both as regarded the Birthplace and the Free Library, so that any criticism of his was in the best faith for both
institutions. He thought, from the information received from time to time, that Mr. Carnegie's wish was to improve the Free Library by giving them the opportunity of extending it on this side. He thought it was small, and not as fine and roomy as he anticipated, and the Mayor at that time made known to him the fact that there were three cottages on that side of the proposed Free Library. Mr. Carnegie said, 'Well, get them, and then make what you want. Take what you want for the Free Library, and also add to the land round the Birthplace,' thus killing two birds with one stone.

He (the speaker) thought that was something like the case. If he was wrong, he wished to be corrected. Then, as to the plans: so far as he saw, the elevation of one he thought looked suitable, but it looked to him rather that the long line of frontage made it look somewhat 'streety.' Would it not be possible to make it a little more 'blocky,' so as not to make it appear like a row of cottages? He was surprised to hear that it was for a caretaker for the Birthplace, or that the gardener should have a cottage. He understood the cottage was intended for the Free Library, and he saw plans in Mr. Holtom's office which were just the thing. That cottage might be placed on the land absolutely belonging to the Free Library property. It seemed to him they had lately housed the gardener very comfortably at New Place, so that there was every provision for the man there. If he was wrong in expecting that cottage to be for the caretaker for the Library, he wished for information.

'The Vicar observed that he thought Mr. Smallwood had misapprehended the use to which they intended putting the cottage. It was specially with the idea of pointing that out that he alluded to the project of opening the garden. They felt if the garden was to be open to the public they would require some special attendant to see that the flowers were not stolen, and it was suggested by the ex-Mayor at their last meeting that the cottage which they carefully mentioned was to be for an attendant rather than a gardener, and might form the residence for a man who would combine the duties of looking after the Free Library at night and looking after the garden through the day. Mr. Archie Flower was not present, but he ventured to remind the meeting that that was, he thought, in his mind at the time; but no doubt the Chairman would correct him if he was wrong, or endorse what he had said if he was right.

'The Chairman remarked that as to the land given by Mr. Carnegie, that gentleman had bought the whole of the property between there and that which belonged to the Corporation. He had practically left it in his son's discretion to make a dividing line between that which he gave to the Trustees and that which he proposed to make over to the Free Library. In exercising that discretion, Mr. Archie Flower's desire was to leave a space between there and the Free Library, the freehold of which would belong to the Free
Library, but the whole garden would extend to the Free Library, two rocks of stone being put merely to denote the boundary between the Free Library and the Shakespeare Trustees. In making that line he thought that some ten or twelve feet from the Free Library would be the freehold, and the rest would be devoted to the garden, so that there would be access round the Free Library upon the Free Library land. Then the next point had been partly answered by the Vicar. There were possibilities of their requiring an extra attendant or gardener connected with the Trust. They as Trustees had nothing to do with the Free Library and that property, but they thought it would be very desirable to have upon the property a cottage that might be devoted to an attendant who would possibly have the care of the hot-water apparatus for the Free Library. Until such an attendant was required, an arrangement could possibly be made for the caretaker to the Free Library to rent their cottage. A good arrangement would be to have a tenant who could go to the Free Library and perhaps be of use there and do the work of the two. The only stipulation they would make in giving this land to the Free Library was that they should retain the right of road to the back of the building that they proposed to put up from the Corporation property for the carting of coal and things of that kind. That would be one of the stipulations upon which they would give that land to the Corporation for the Free Library. He thought that would be only fair and reasonable.

"Mr. Smallwood said if they built that cottage on their own land it would ultimately lead to another erection on the Free Library land, which, if it could be avoided, would be better. He thought there should be some understanding by which they could only have one house erected.

"The Chairman remarked that it was considered that any money spent by the Trustees of the Birthplace should be upon their own freehold. They could not spend Trustees' money upon erecting anything for the Free Library, or upon their land.

"After some discussion, in which the Mayor said he thought the matter was safe in the hands of Mr. A. D. Flower as representing the Free Library, and the Chairman as representing that Trust, the Vicar's motion was put and carried."

13. After reading this, and realising that all the old houses between the Technical School and Shakespeare's Birthplace were actually to be pulled down, and only "two rocks of stone put merely to denote the boundary between the Free Library and the Shakespeare Trustees"—I wrote my first letter on the subject to the Morning Post, which published it on February 11, 1903. It was neither "loud-mouthed" nor "censorious"—it merely called public attention to what I considered (and still consider) a national scandal.
VANDALISM AT STRATFORD-ON-AVON

SHAKESPEARE’S BIRTHPLACE.

To the Editor of the Morning Post.

“Sir,—Several literary people and lovers of Shakespeare have asked me to say a word of public protest against the further pulling-down and modernising of this unique old town by the erection of a brand-new ‘Carnegie Free Library’ next to Shakespeare’s Birthplace. While fully realising the benevolent intentions of the wealthy American manufacturer with whom ‘free libraries’ are now indissolubly associated, there seems to many of us a point at which even wealth should draw the line, and, considering the fact that the Stratford townspeople are by no means over-anxious to possess a Free Library at all, and that they would infinitely rather have some of their beautiful fifteenth-century carved house-fronts (now for the most part hidden under stucco plastered over them in the reign of Queen Anne) uncovered and restored, it seems a little hard that they should be forced to take what the majority of them do not want, and that they should have to see money spent on what they deem for themselves wholly unnecessary. According to present plans, there will be considerable demolition in one of the most traditional quarters of the town. The custodian’s cottage in the garden of the Birthplace is to be pulled down, as also the cottages next to it, and historic Henley Street will soon become a row of ‘modern-antique’ buildings, by which Shakespeare’s House will be but sadly and incongruously companioned. Personally I have no doubt as to the excellent motives of all the persons concerned in this business, and I exonerate them from all suspicion of ‘self-advertisement’ in the putting up of a Free Library unsought of the people, but I know I am only expressing a very general and deeply-felt opinion by saying that when there are so few old-world towns remaining unspoilt in England, the Birthplace of Shakespeare should at least be guarded more sacredly for the nation at large than that a portion of its most historic street should be left open to the easy purchase of the mere millionaire.—Yours, etc.,

Marie Corelli.

“Stratford-on-Avon, Feb. 9.”

It will be plainly seen by the two foregoing clauses of my statement that I made no movement whatever in the matter, till I learned the Trustees’ own statement of what they intended to do. It will be rather late in the day now to deny their own expressed intentions (should they seek to do so) inasmuch as those intentions were fully set forth, resolved, seconded and carried, at their meeting on Wednesday, February 4, 1903, and were reported in their own words in the local paper of the same week.

14. After my letter appeared in the Morning Post, a flood of correspondence poured in upon me from all quarters of the world. As soon as the leading journals of London and Birmingham took up the question, Mr. Archibald D. Flower (now Deputy-Mayor, the office of Mayor being occu-
THE PLAIN TRUTH OF THE INTENDED

plied by Mr. G. M. Bird) wrote the following letter on February 28 to the Editor of the *Birmingham Daily Post*:

SHAKESPEARE'S BIRTHPLACE AND THE FREE LIBRARY.

To the Editor of the *Daily Post*.

"SIR,—As this question has been taken up by some who are evidently not acquainted with the locality, it is apparently necessary to make a further statement of the actual facts.

"In January 1902 the Mayor¹ wrote to Mr. Carnegie asking if he would contribute to a Free Library in Stratford-upon-Avon. On February 18 he received a reply from Mr. Carnegie, from America, saying that he would feel it an honour to give the sum necessary to erect the structure of a Free Library, if the Act were adopted and a site provided. The Act having been unanimously adopted on February 11 by the² Town Council, it seems hardly accurate or fair to Mr. Carnegie to say that he has 'forced' the Stratford townspeople 'to take what the majority of them do not want.'

"With reference to the site. In the first place it must be clearly understood that Mr. Carnegie had nothing whatever to do with its selection.

"The Market Hall was suggested, but found too small for the purpose, and it was therefore decided to build on land adjoining the Technical School (erected in 1898) in Henley Street. Part of this was bare space (owing to a fire some years ago); part was occupied by a china shop and owned by the Corporation. There are three cottages standing between this site and the garden of Shakspeare's House.

"In the autumn, Mr. Carnegie, hearing that the Trustees were anxious to acquire the two cottages nearest the Birthplace, bought all three. They were not easy to buy, as for many weeks the owner of the two nearest the shop absolutely refused to sell, having determined to rebuild and open them as a tea-shop.

"Mr. Carnegie then presented the land to the Trustees 'to be added to and preserved as part of the Birthplace property,' it having been previously arranged that a small portion of the land occupied by the cottage next the shop should be made use of for the Library.

"It has been asserted 'these houses are evidently Shakspearean and associated with the Poet, who must have seen them day by day.' This is obviously incorrect. All these cottages are of much more modern date, and the one, part of which is to be utilised for the Library, was built within living memory. The china shop, undoubtedly, contains some old timbers, but this property, which has been pulled about and altered from

¹ Then Mr. A. D. Flower.
² The matter was not and never has been put to the vote of the townspeople by calling an open Public Meeting.
INTERIOR OF BIRCH'S SHOP, 1563: OLD FIREPLACE, OAK CARVING.
VANDALISM AT STRATFORD-ON-AVON

time to time, has an ugly modern front, and is in a perfectly hopeless state of decay. To ‘restore’ it would simply mean to pull down and rebuild; to leave it untouched would mean to see it crumble to pieces. This view is borne out by several experts, including one of the architects of the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings, who recently inspected the property.

"It is thus abundantly clear that this building must either fall down or be pulled down, and it was therefore decided to utilise the space for the erection of the Free Library, and the greatest care is being exercised in planning a structure quiet and suitable in character and of the best possible design and materials.

"What might have been the alternative? If the ground next the Technical School had not been purchased, a very ordinary shop would have been built; on the other side two cottages would have been converted into an up-to-date 'tea-shop,' while the china shop would have tumbled slowly to pieces and then been rebuilt."

ARCHIE FLOWER, Deputy-Mayor.

"STRATFORD-UPON-AVON, Feb. 28."

15. It is therefore perfectly clear that, according to the local authorities' own statements, the old houses on the Birthplace side of Henley Street were destined for complete demolition. The fact is corroborated,—

1st. By the woodcut of the intended Library with its sixty-one feet of frontage, published in the Stratford-on-Avon Herald of August 15, 1902, and its accompanying letterpress descriptive of its suggested "palatial" splendour.

2nd. By the personal statement of Mr. Edgar Flower, Chairman of the Executive Committee at the meeting of Trustees held on February 4, 1903, as duly reported.

3rd. By the letter of Mr. Archibald D. Flower to the Birmingham Daily Post of February 28, 1903, in which he alludes to the opinion of "one of the architects of the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings, who recently inspected the property." This architect is a Mr. Cossins, local correspondent for the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings, who thought so little of the value of a house which has stood more or less as it now is, ever since Shakespeare's birth, that he did not even trouble to communicate the plan of the intended alteration of Henley Street to his Society, though he might laudably have done so, had he paused to consider or to remember the traditional value of that classic ground to a large portion of the educated world.

It may here be mentioned, in passing, that this same Mr. Cossins, who informed Mr. Flower with respect to the old 1563 dwelling that "to 'restore' it would simply mean to pull down and rebuild; to leave it untouched would mean to see it crumble to pieces,"—has,—since I persuaded..."
the London experts to view the condition of things,—altered his opinion, and has stated that it can be "repaired and adapted to the uses of a Free Library." Opposed to this is the far weightier testimony of Mr. George Patrick of the British Archaeological Association, who writes in his report to that body—

"I fear the proposed alterations to the interior of this house for the purpose of utilizing it as a portion of the new Carnegie Library would seriously impair the stability of the structure, besides destroying its identity."

(From the Report re Alterations, Henley Street, Stratford-on-Avon, to the Chairman and Members of the British Archaeological Association.

(Signed) Geo. Patrick, A.R.I.B.A., Hon. Sec.)

16. In a recent letter to the press Mr. Sidney Lee states that "no conspicuous historic nor archeological interest"—attaches to any of the houses. This is a somewhat rash statement, in the face of the following facts which were brought to light by a Birmingham Daily Post correspondent who examined the interiors of the two cottages next to the Birthplace.

**SHAKESPEARE'S BIRTHPLACE.**

**The Adjacent Cottages.**

*(From the "Birmingham Daily Post," Saturday, May 9, 1903.)*

"In the controversy that is raging respecting the demolition or preservation of the cottages nearest Shakespeare's Birthplace—two of the four tenements given by Mr. Carnegie for the purpose of extending Shakespeare's garden and more completely isolating the Poet's house—the writers have been rather handicapped in being unable to view the interior of the premises. True, access has been afforded the public through the first cottage, adjoining Birch's china shop, to the back of the four cottages in question, and, seen from this point of view, and also from the street, the ordinary observer would no doubt come to the conclusion that the cottages were not worth saving; but yesterday, finding the front doors open of the two cottages nearest to Shakespeare's garden, our Stratford correspondent entered, made a careful inspection of the interior of the premises, and was astonished at what he saw. It may here be remarked that yesterday was the first time the cottages were thrown open from the street. The tenants vacated them some few weeks ago, since which time the houses have remained closed. Downstairs there is a fine open fireplace, with inglenook and chimney-corner seats; but at a later period a comparatively modern grate has been put in. The upper rooms contain some massive timber framing in the walls, oak beams well pegged together, but all partially hidden by successive coats of whitewash and plaster. Opposite the window, and running just beneath the ceiling, is a row of quaint open railing, to be found only in very
little over £3000, and the nation became owners of the much-altered but ancient fabric which John Shakspere first purchased in 1556, and which remained with his descendants until 1806. Happily the anxiety now evinced extends only to the prospective demolition of a few neighbouring houses which at that time (1847), notwithstanding long years of deterioration, were much in harmony with the well-worn Birthplace buildings, a very small portion of which, a disused butcher's shop, was the show-place for visitors, the larger part being used as a public-house of somewhat meagre appearance, The Swan and Maydenhead. At that period, too, the Birthplace was crowded on both sides by small houses, soon afterwards removed.

"At the north-west end were three poor and modern cottages standing upon what had once been John Shakspere's garden, and on the south-east was an ancient property, owned in Shakspere's time by the Willys family, of King's Norton and Handsworth—a small portion whereof had been purchased from John Shakspere, and adjoining this stood the tenements which are now attracting so much attention, and which are deemed too lowly and humble to compare with the modernised pile adjacent; nor is this a matter for wonder, for by an unstinted expenditure of money, by a loving and reverential care, the Birthplace has been judiciously restored to a faithful copy of the original and substantial home of William Shakspere. Yet something may be said from the point of view of the objectors to removal, for however humble and insignificant they now appear, these tenements, defaced by time, ARE THE DIRECT SURVIVALS OF THOSE WHICH HOUSED THE NEIGHBOURS AND FRIENDS OF JOHN SHAKSPERE, THE MEN AND WOMEN FAMILIAR TO HIS SON WILLIAM IN HIS SCHOOLBOY DAYS, AND IN CONSTANT INTERCOURSE WITH HIM AS HE WAS DAILY PASSING UP AND DOWN THE STREET.

"To simplify the description of this group of Henley Street buildings, we may designate John Shakspere's large house and garden as No. 1; the house adjoining, belonging to Willys, No. 2; the tenements now in question, once belonging to Shakspere's neighbour, Richard Horneby, No. 3; and the property adjoining it, belonging to the Corporation, No. 4. No. 1, originally one house, had been purchased by John Shakspere as two, viz., the part afterwards The Maydenhead, from Edward West, in 1556, and the part forming the butcher's shop, from Edmund Hall, in 1574. He had, however, been tenant of the whole before the first purchase. The land which extended back to the Guild piths—the old coach road from Birmingham to London—was occupied by a barn and various other outbuildings essential to the trades of a grazier, wool dealer, glover, and butcher. The boundaries were eccentric, and appeared to run into his neighbour's premises, so that about the year 1598–99, at a time when he was in comfortable circumstances and not at all pressed for money, he sold off land on each side of his property—viz., to Badger on one side, and Willys on the other.

"This latter, or No. 2, before the year 1575, belonged to a William Wedgewood, who, like his neighbour Shakspere, occupied two houses, and also, like him, was a yeoman with a trade, for when on the 20th September
Ventilating Gallery in the rescued Cottages, formerly one House, belonging to the Shakespeare Family.
OLD HOUSES, WHICH, COMMUNICATING WITH THE LANDING OUTSIDE, FURNISHED VENTILATION AT A PERIOD WHEN FIREPLACES IN BEDROOMS WERE UNHEARD OF. But the greatest surprise of all was that which awaited the investigator when he ascended to the attic, and discovered a FINELY-TIMBERED ROOF OF MASSIVE BLACK OAK BEAMS, CERTAINLY CENTURIES OLD, SOME OF THE RAFTERS BEING FROM A FOOT TO FOURTEEN INCHES IN THICKNESS. The back and side walls are well timbered, but a careful scrutiny showed that at one time—probably a hundred years ago or more—these two cottages were newly fronted. The front is of substantial, but plain, brick, and all the timber framing is gone; but it is not difficult to discover where the modern has been joined on to the old. A panelled door, now closed, communicating at one time with the adjoining room, and proves that what are now two tenements were previously one house, and a house of some importance, judging by its size. A division of the property is also evident elsewhere. The foundations, as viewed from the cellar, consist of ancient ' rubble ' work of an early date. THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT, THEREFORE, THAT THESE TWO COTTAGES ARE CONTEMPORARY WITH SHAKESPEARE, AND SOME PORTIONS MUCH OLDER, AND THAT THEY OUGHT TO BE PRESERVED. The comparatively modern frontage ought not to condemn them, considering how the difficulty was overcome in regard to Shakespeare's House, which had been altered and ' pulled about ' by successive owners before it was purchased on behalf of the nation. As to the antiquity of the two cottages in question, the views from photographs taken from the street and from the open yard at the back, which have been published in illustrated papers, give a very inadequate and misleading idea."

The Daily Post here alludes to a set of photographs published in the Illustrated London News by Mr. Snowden Ward, who described all the houses as "Mean Brick Tenements, Sixty years old, which sentimentalists wish to Preserve." Comment is superfluous on this point.

17. It should be particularly noted that Mr. Archibald D. Flower's letter to the Birmingham Daily Post, on Feb. 28, 1903, re-stating the intended DEMOLITION of the old houses, was written when he must have been perfectly cognisant of the facts supplied respecting the property, by Mr. Joseph Hill, a Birmingham antiquary who is well acquainted with the Stratford-on-Avon neighbourhood, and who wrote as follows:—

"The interest aroused on behalf of the old Stratford buildings in Henley Street, dear to every Englishman as the house of Shakespear's birth, in view of the changes projected to provide a site for the new Library, is probably greater than at any time since 1847, when the nation waited, with tropitation and alarm, the result of the historic building being submitted to public competition at a London mart. Threats of its purchase at any cost for removal to America were rife, and were quite consistent with the adventurous character of our American cousins. It was, therefore, a great relief when on the 16th September 1847 Mr. Robins knocked down the lot at a
little over £3000, and the nation became owners of the much-altered but ancient fabric which John Shakspeare first purchased in 1556, and which remained with his descendants until 1806. Happily the anxiety now evinced extends only to the prospective demolition of a few neighbouring houses which at that time (1847), notwithstanding long years of deterioration, were much in harmony with the well-worn Birthplace buildings, a very small portion of which, a disused butcher's shop, was the show-place for visitors, the larger part being used as a public-house of somewhat meagre appearance, The Swan and Maydenhead. At that period, too, the Birthplace was crowded on both sides by small houses, soon afterwards removed.

"At the north-west end were three poor and modern cottages standing upon what had once been John Shakspeare's garden, and on the south-east was an ancient property, owned in Shakspeare's time by the Willyes family, of King's Norton and Handsworth—a small portion whereof had been purchased from John Shakspeare, and adjoining this stood the tenements which are now attracting so much attention, and which are deemed too lowly and humble to compare with the modernised pile adjacent; nor is this a matter for wonder, for by an unstinted expenditure of money, by a loving and reverential care, the Birthplace has been judiciously restored to a faithful copy of the original and substantial home of William Shakspeare. Yet something may be said from the point of view of the objectors to removal, for however humble and insignificant they now appear, these tenements, defaced by time, are the direct survivals of those which housed the neighbours and friends of John Shakspeare, the men and women familiar to his son William in his schoolboy days, and in constant intercourse with him as he was daily passing up and down the street.

"To simplify the description of this group of Henley Street buildings, we may designate John Shakspeare's large house and garden as No. 1; the house adjoining, belonging to Willys, No. 2; the tenements now in question, once belonging to Shakspeare's neighbour, Richard Horneby, No. 3; and the property adjoining it, belonging to the Corporation, No. 4. No. 1, originally one house, had been purchased by John Shakspeare as two, viz., the part afterwards The Maydenhead, from Edward West, in 1556, and the part forming the butcher's shop, from Edmund Hall, in 1574. He had, however, been tenant of the whole before the first purchase. The land which extended back to the Guild pits—the old coach road from Birmingham to London—was occupied by a barn and various other outbuildings essential to the trades of a grazier, wool dealer, glover, and butcher. The boundaries were eccentric, and appeared to run into his neighbour's premises, so that about the year 1598–99, at a time when he was in comfortable circumstances and not at all pressed for money, he sold off land on each side of his property—viz., to Badger on one side, and Willys on the other.

"This latter, or No. 2, before the year 1575, belonged to a William Wedgewood, who, like his neighbour Shakspeare, occupied two houses, and also, like him, was a yeoman with a trade, for when on the 20th September
1575 he sold to Edward Willys, of King’s Norton, yeoman, the two houses, described as between the tenements of Richard Horneby and the tenement of John Shakspeare, yeoman, he was designated a tailor, and at others a yeoman. Transfers of property at that time were very important transactions. This particular deed is preserved in the Birthplace. It was prepared by Walter Rocher, who was not only a lawyer but also a parson and schoolmaster, and had recently been master of the Grammar School attended by William Shakspeare. Not only were John Shakspeare and Richard Horneby both present, but Willys appeared to have taken with him two witnesses from King’s Norton. The formal proceedings included the giving possession to Willys on the spot, and as William Shakspeare was then eleven years of age, he doubtless found means of being present.

"It is, however, the property No. 3 which has a more than ordinary interest at this time. Richard Hornebye, a blacksmith, was owner and occupier. He had early in Elizabeth’s reign bought it from Thomas Grevill, of Charingworth, Chipping Camden. Wedgewood’s land, however, extended behind it, and in 1573 Hornebye bought from him the land at the back, reaching to the Gild pits. This deed was also prepared by Walter Rocher, and he and John Shakspeare (called John Shapfer) were witnesses. A remarkable circumstance connected with this deed is that the seal used bore the initials W.S. It undoubtedly belonged to John Shakspeare, and must have belonged to his grandfather or uncle, and in after years his son William had the same device exactly reproduced on his gold seal-ring—the most interesting memento of the Poet now in the Birthplace. The next property, No. 4, had formerly belonged to the Stratford Gild, and passed to the Corporation. It was always described as town land, and in Shakspeare’s day was held by William Wilson, but before 1620 Thomas Greene, the Clerk to the Corporation, was the occupier.

"It will thus be seen that the two next neighbours, John Shakspeare and William Wedgewood, both combined a trade with their semi-rural pursuits, and each occupied two houses; also that their neighbour Richard Hornebye held a house and forge which would front the street. A smith’s forge was always an irresistible attraction to a schoolboy, and the tailor yeoman certainly had the ‘use, possession, and occupation’ of the house next to Shakspeare’s until William Shakspeare was in his twelfth year. Who, therefore, can read, otherwise than as a memory of Henley Street and Wedgewood and Hornbye, Shakspeare’s graphic description by Hubert of the reception by the people of the news of Prince Arthur’s death in King John, Act iv. sc. ii.—

‘I saw a smith stand with his hammer thus—
The whilst his iron did on anvil cool,
With open mouth swallowing a tailor’s news,
Who with his shears and measure in his hand,
Standing in slippers (which his nimble haste
Had falsely thrust upon contrary feet)
Told of,’ etc.
During the whole of William Shakspeare's life the Hornebyes worked at this forge, but in 1620 they were sold to Thomas Nashe, who six years later married Shakspeare's granddaughter, and in 1647 bought Willye's property, No. 2. Soon after 1598 Edward Willyes, having bought from John Shakspeare about ninety square yards of land lying between their houses, reconstructed and converted his property to an inn, called by the sign of The Bell, of which a Robert Brookes became the landlord. John Shakspeare's death took place in 1601, and a year later William Shakspeare let the larger part of his birthplace (and also some land he had recently purchased from Combes) to one Lewis Hiccox, the letting in Shakspeare's absence in London being probably effected by one of his three brothers, or his sister, living on the spot. Hiccox at once converted the house into an inn bearing the sign of The Maydenhead. Having hitherto been John Shakspeare's wool warehouse, it was probably unletable as a private house, and its value would not be enhanced by the proximity of the new inn, The Bell. Anyway, Lewis Hiccox obtained a licence for it in January 1603, and for some time considerable unpleasantness existed between the rivals in trade, resulting in both parties appearing before the Justices in the following June, when Jane Brookes and Alice Hiccox were both bound over in penalties to keep the peace, which they probably did, for Brookes remained at The Bell until 1614, and a widow of Hiccox was at The Maydenhead until 1640.

The early history of The Bell has a considerable connection with Birmingham people, for in 1609 the King's Norton yeoman conveyed it to Thomas Osborne, of Hampstead, and Bartholomew Austyn, of Northfield, in trust for his nephews, Edward Willyes, a sailor, and his brother Thomas, both of Handsworth. In 1611 he made a similar deed of the land he had bought of John Shakspeare to William Wastell, of Aston, and Edward Willyes, of Handsworth, in trust for his nephew Symon Wastell, cutler. In these and other deeds the property of John and William Shakspeare was always referred to, and Birmingham witnesses were taken to Stratford to give formal possession. Among these was Henry Cookes, a lawyer, of Handsworth, who, strange to say, was himself born in the house of the Shakspeares at Snitterfield, and he and his family were intimately acquainted with the Shakspeares. Subsequently a lawsuit arose between the Willyes and Symon Wastell, of Saltley, the owner of the land bought of Shakspeare; and ultimately the entire property No. 2 was sold for £108 to Thomas Nash, the owner of No. 3, and also, in the right of his wife, owner of the birthplace, which was in 1670 left to the Hart family; Nos. 2 and 3 remaining the property of the Nash family until 1782, when they were bought by John Keen, a substantial maltster, of Stratford, and after his death were sold through a firm of solicitors in Birmingham, when all the ancient deeds were retained as useless, and lay hidden away for sixty years, but were discovered in 1864, and as they threw much light upon
THE HISTORY OF THE BIRTHPLACE THEY WERE HANDED OVER TO THE
SHAKESPEARE TRUST."

Readers are here requested to note that the "ancient deeds" alluded to,
are in the possession of the Birthplace Trustees, and were to hand for
reference as to the Shakespearean connection with the property, had the
Trustees, according to the duties imposed on them by the obligations of their
Trust, thought of examining them. But instead of doing so, they delibera-
tely resolved, as has already been shown and proved, to ENTIRELY
DESTROY property of which they held valuable deeds testifying to its antiquity
and connection with Shakespeare.

18. After the communication made by Mr. Joseph Hill, which was
received with professed incredulity, and the letter of Mr. Archibald D.
Flower on February 28, 1903, both of which appeared in the Birmingham
Daily Post, the correspondence and controversy continued in all quarters of
the press. It was however entirely kept out of the local paper, the
Stratford-on-Avon Herald, so that the townspeople were more or less in
ignorance of the animated nature of the discussion. THE SUBJOINED LETTER
FROM MR. SIDNEY COLVIN, ADDRESSED TO THE TIMES, WAS NOT MADE
"LOCALLY" KNOWN.

A PLEA FOR STRATFORD-ON-AVON.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

"SIR,—Of the scores of thousands of persons who have visited with
curiosity and reverence the cottage Birthplace of Shakespeare in Henley
Street, Stratford-on-Avon, few surely would desire to see its immediate sur-
roundings transformed, or modernised more than can be helped. A plan is
now on foot which, if carried out, must inevitably have this effect. The plan
is to build, by help of funds supplied by Mr. Carnegie, a new Free Library in
the same street with the Birthplace and about twenty-five yards distant from
it. Now it is plain that such a building, however discreetly designed, cannot
fail to be the dominant object in the little street, and to strike a sharp note
of modernity in almost immediate contact with the Birthplace itself. SURELY
THIS VICINITY SHOULD BE KEPT SACRED TO SHAKESPEARE. Local opinion is
much divided on the merits of the scheme, and it seems very desirable that
the efforts of those who are urging its reconsideration should be backed by an
expression of public opinion from outside. Miss Ellen Terry, Mr. Wilson
Barrett, and Mr. Milliken, an American author, who has been drawn to
make his home in Stratford by devotion to the memory of Shakespeare—
these and others have already done their best. But a wider appeal seems to
be necessary.

"The exact position I understand to be as follows. At the beginning of
last year the then Mayor of Stratford, Mr. Archie Flower, begged from Mr.
Carnegie the gift of a Free Library for the town. Mr. Carnegie, with his
usual liberality, consented, and subsequently he bought and gave to the
Trustees of the Birthplace three cottages standing in the street between it
and a piece of ground partly vacant, partly occupied by a shop belonging to
the Town Council. It is on this piece of ground, together with the site of
one of the cottages, that, according to the plan which at present holds the
field, the new Free Library is to be built. The alternative proposed by those
who dislike the scheme is that Mr. Carnegie's gift should be housed, where
there is plenty of room for it, in connection with another building which is
not a part of the ancient Stratford, and which the town already owes in
great part to the public spirit of the family of the ex-Mayor—namely, the
Memorial Theatre. This seems a perfectly reasonable and graceful sug-
gestion. As to the three cottages which have become by Mr. Carnegie's
liberality the property of the Trustees, they are very humble and quite
harmless, as any reader not familiar with the site may convince himself by
referring to the Illustrated London News for December 6, 1902, where they
are figured. Although one of them has been proved to date from Shake-
peare's own day (see a letter from Miss Marie Corelli in yesterday's
Academy), there could be no great objection to their demolition for the sake
of the better protection of the Birthplace itself from fire. But in the minds
of many there is the gravest possible concern at the prospect of the little
street being further altered by the erection of a conspicuous modern building,
associated with the names of modern benefactors and municipal authorities.
Might not the approaching gathering for the annual performances at the
Shakespeare Theatre be made the occasion for a public expression of such
concern by those who share it?—I am, etc.,

SIDNEY COLVIN.

"British Museum, March 22."

"The Avon Star," Reason
for its issue.

How Mr. Colvin was led to adopt a different and less scholarly tone
later, much to his own subsequent annoyance, will be shown later on.

19. I found, as I have said, that the controversy respecting the old houses
in Henley Street was almost if not quite entirely suppressed in the Strat-
ford-on-Avon Herald. When, however, I understood that the Editor of that
paper was on the Free Library Committee, the position became clear to me.
In order therefore, to let the townsmen know something of the feeling
aroused by the proposed demolition of the old houses, I issued a small
magazine for the Festival season in April, edited by myself, and entitled
The Avon Star. A Literary Manual for the Stratford-on-Avon Season of
1903. I also wrote an article for King and Country which appeared in
the April number of that magazine, entitled "The Body-Snatchers"—calling
attention to the intended vandalism. In the light of the various events
that have happened since the publication of that article, I have nothing to
regret or to retract in my statements therein put forth respecting the re-
olved destruction of the buildings genuinely proved of Shakespearean con-
nection and interest. The Avon Star contained an article on "The Spoliation
of Henley Street"—this article being chiefly a re-publication of the letters
written on the subject to the press by various individuals, including Miss
VANDALISM AT STRATFORD-ON-AVON

Ellen Terry and Lady Campbell, and a reproduction of general press opinion.

20. Just before the issue of these two magazine expressions of opinion, the Mayor of Stratford-on-Avon announced that a Public Luncheon in honour of the Shakespeare Anniversary, would be held in the Town Hall on the 23rd of April. He called on me, and expressed a very great desire that I would use my influence to secure the presence of the American Ambassador, and Mr. Beerbohm Tree. I agreed to do my best, and succeeded so far as the latter gentleman was concerned. Mr. Choate, the American Ambassador regretted that the multiplicity of his engagements at that particular date would not permit him to attend. I shall betray no confidence by giving here the following eloquent passages from the two letters he wrote to me on the matter:—

"My countrymen fully appreciate and sympathise with your devotion to the memory of Shakespeare, which they claim as a precious part of their English heritage, and it would have given me great pleasure to testify to this at the coming Celebration had I been able to be present."

"If anything could have persuaded me to cancel my many engagements for that week and that day, your earnest appeal would have had that effect."

Upon the same subject, the Mayor (Mr. G. M. Bird) wrote to me as follows:—

"We are deeply indebted to you for using your powerful influence to secure Mr. Choate’s presence, and only regret other engagements prevent his coming."

I quote this incident merely as a proof that despite the Henley Street controversy I was not, as has been freely stated, “engaged in a personal quarrel” with the Mayor and Corporation. I was, on the contrary, doing all I could to help them in making their Festival a success. The Mayor asked me to respond to the toast of “Literature and Art” at the Public Luncheon on April 23, and said he thought “it would be best not to allude to the Free Library business” in my speech. I told him I had no such intention, as I considered controversial matters out of place at a public function.

21. The Avon Star, reproducing the various correspondence and press opinions on the impending destruction of Henley Street came out in Stratford-on-Avon in the first week of the Festival. It contained nothing offensive, and nothing contentious, being, so far as the Henley Street matter was concerned, merely a repetition of what had already appeared in the press. The rest of its contents were supplied by various contributors, including myself.

22. On the 22nd of April, the eve of the Shakespeare Birthday Celebration, a scurrilous lampoon upon the Avon Star, and myself as its editor, was issued in the town, and sold freely by a stationer who is the secretary of the Technical School, and in that capacity is under the authority of Mr. Archibald D. Flower. The lampoon was written by a clergyman whose family I had benefited in various friendly ways, and to whom I had been the means of financial and social assistance. On the same day ribald rhymes
against me were sold in the street, but as I was fully informed of the sources from which these senseless attacks emanated, I paid no attention whatever to them, beyond regretting so publicly displayed an evidence of the lack of education and good manners.

23. On the 23rd of April, Mr. Sidney Colvin paid me a personal visit. He had however passed some time during the morning with Mr. Archibald D. Flower, and I perceived at once that he had been persuaded to condemn the old houses in Henley Street, at an outside glance, without being told of their history as furnished by Mr. Joseph Hill, or being made aware of the records concerning the property which were existing in the birthplace. I had no time to go into the matter with him, as he only arrived at my house within a few minutes of the hour fixed for the Public Luncheon, at which I was required to speak; moreover I fully recognised, that for the time he was completely biased against my representations.

24. That I should have been invited to appear at the Public Luncheon at all under the existing circumstances of scurrilous personal attack, was in the nature of an ordeal to which, I venture to think, I should not have been subjected. The Luncheon was given under the auspices of the Shakespeare Club of Stratford-on-Avon, of which I am informed Mr. Archibald D. Flower is or was Chairman. On that same day, the scurrilous lampoon before-mentioned on me had been published, in an attempt to hold me up to contempt and ridicule before the townspeople, visitors, and representatives of the press, by a clerical member of the same Club. Therefore, I occupied the position of a so-called “distinguished guest” of the Club, publicly lampooned by a member of the Club, under the apparent auspices of the Chairman of the Club, merely on account of my action in endeavouring to save Henley Street from complete wreckage and mal-transformation. My speech was, however, expected all the same, and as certain of the other speakers had said a great deal about themselves and each other, and very little about Shakespeare whose anniversary the meeting was supposed to celebrate, I spoke, as I truly felt, and my words were reported as follows:—

“Miss Marie Corelli, in reply, said the Mayor had asked one of the least among the students of Literature to respond for the greatest of professions—one who was moreover altogether of the wrong sex to undertake such a responsibility. For, as most writing women knew, there was a tacit understanding among the lords of creation to the effect that every author worthy the name must be, nay, should be, a ‘he.’ Therefore, as merely a ‘she,’ she found her present task somewhat overwhelming. To thank Mr. Howard Pearson for his able speech was easy, but to say anything more to the point than he had already said would be to ‘gild refined gold and paint the lily.’ And to make any adequate response on behalf of Literature on such a day as that, and in such a place as the Town Hall of Stratford-on-Avon, would tax all the resources of eloquence ever found in a Cicero or Mark Antony. For Stratford-on-Avon was in itself the cradle of Literature. In its humble, but world-venerated Henley Street was born the
greatest of poets, the most admirable of artists, the wisest of philosophers, the most imaginative of romancers. There were certain poets, philosophers, and romancers before Shakespeare, but he easily eclipsed them all. There had been and still were certain poets, philosophers, and romancers existing since his day, but they were only his servants, and he remained supreme master. Therefore, in responding for Literature, she responded more or less for Stratford, which gave to the world its greatest literary genius, from whose rich fount all other literature had since been largely derived. Speaking in a broad sense, Literature as they in their time knew it was merely an output of several strong or weak variations on what the man of Stratford wrote three hundred years ago. It was a ringing of the changes on the thoughts, ideas, and prophecies of ‘our beloved, the author, Mr. William Shakespeare, and what he hath left us!’ From the highest form of modern poem or essay to the latest Times political leader they found echoes of Shakespeare running through the gamut, and toning the scale. The modern versifier or dramatist tingled to the tips of his toes with satisfaction if his lines were compared even unfavourably with the lines of Shakespeare. The aspiring reporter was equally proud if he could bring his best descriptive article to a convenient finish with an apt Shakespearean quotation. In order to realise fully how all-pervading was the influence of the inspired Stratfordian, they had only to try and imagine Literature without Shakespeare! There would be a blank indeed! It would resemble an incomplete garden without its finest flower, the English rose. Not only in Great Britain was that all-pervading influence felt and recognised, but throughout the entire literary world. Shakespeare’s muse had helped to inspire all Europe’s greatest literary men. The biographies of Germany’s famous poet Goethe told them how his sensibilities were shaken to the root ‘by the power of the mighty Shakespeare.’ The same ‘power of the mighty Shakespeare’ influenced Schiller after Goethe; indeed Germany was so conscious of the fact that her noblest literature was founded on the genius of their Stratford-on-Avon Man of Men, that in almost every little town of her empire there was a Shakespeare Club or a Shakespeare Dramatic Society. It was in a manner somewhat of a reproach to them in Great Britain to realise that Germany honoured their chief Poet more than they did—(Hear, hear). And if they would not be looked upon as culpably ignorant and careless of their highest privileges, they should see to it that the Fatherland did not herein conquer them on their own ground. Otherwise, perhaps in another hundred years or so, instead of a ‘Bacon theory,’ it might be asserted that Shakespeare was never born in Stratford-on-Avon at all, but was merely ‘made in Germany’—(laughter). For nothing was so easy as to question and decry a great fame. Nothing was so simple as to find fault with what they could not do themselves. And nothing was so delightful to a very small mind as to calumniate a very great one—(Hear, hear). A sweep could, if he liked, object to the sunshine, but he could not lessen one beam of its kindly splendour. So it was with the promulgators
of the Bacon theory. Their own powers were absolutely insignificant as compared to the magnificent genius they sought to vilify. Nevertheless, as she was speaking for Literature, she ventured to say that literary students all over the world would have long ago rejoiced to see a straight answer from Stratford-on-Avon on that subject. Because they all knew that such an answer could be emphatically given, were the necessary pains and scholarly care taken to do so, and the mean wrong inflicted on the dead Poet could be nobly righted by his own native town—(applause). Let them hope that the world would not have to wait long before that was done. Literature, if it be Literature at all, demanded, as they knew, the very life and soul of its workers, but it would be an art not worth serving at all if its most faithful and gifted followers were to be accused after their deaths of the fraud and villainy of putting their names to works which were not their own. As she had said before, Literature was only another word for William Shakespeare. Looking far ahead down the vista of the future, when they who shared in that day's celebration would be mere handfuls of forgotten dust, she saw unborn generations of men and women making their humble pilgrimages to Stratford-on-Avon in that reverent spirit of love and honour which cherished every spot, every tree, every small landmark the great Poet of the world might once have looked upon—(applause). She saw millions of earnest thinkers and workers, students, writers, poets, and dramatists from all the shores of their empire beyond the seas, who should come and tread the streets of that dear little town, pausing wherever they thought or dreamt that Shakespeare might have paused before them. For time, as counted by the influence of an immortal fame, was nothing. Homer, who lived and wrote so many ages ago, was to-day the greatest boast of Greece, Dante of Italy, Shakespeare of England. Whole dynasties had been swept away since their time. Kingdoms had toppled over into oblivion; wealth, power, and tyranny had been as the shifting sand upon the shore, but Homer, Shakespeare, Dante, Goethe—men who were all exposed in their day to

'the whips and scorns of time,
Th' oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,'

stood fast, throned above the ruins of empires, and remained the chief intellectual exponents and representatives of their several countries. To those who neither understood Literature nor took the trouble to learn how to understand it, its power would always appear an unsolved mystery and 'cryptogram'—(applause). But to those who knew how truly a great man's thoughts could mould a nation, Literature would ever be the highest of the arts, and the pen the most urgent of weapons—(applause). Thus it was with a feeling of gratitude not to be expressed in words that she returned thanks for Literature in the name of all literary workers—thanks for that great world of beauty, freedom, truth, and lastlingness of which Shakespeare had given its chief beauty and of which he was sole king—(loud applause)."—Stratford-on-Avon Herald, April 24, 1903.
25. Some few days before this Public Luncheon took place, I had seen the Mayor of Stratford-on-Avon two or three times, and hearing that the destruction of the old houses was contemplated during the Festival fortnight, had earnestly urged him to use his efforts against such a jarring incongruity. He demurred at first, but finally consented to "speak to Mr. Archibald Flower." Demolition was postponed, and his explanation to a press reporter who interviewed him on the subject was that—

"The houses would not be touched during the festival week, because it was thought inadvisable to fill Henley Street with dust and débris when there were so many visitors about. Besides—and he admitted that there was dissatisfaction in some quarters—the destruction of the cottages might wound the feelings of some of the visitors."

"When the Festival is over, however, added Mr. Bird, the two cottages belonging to the Corporation, on the site of which the Library is to be built, will certainly come down. The remaining cottage—that next to the garden—is the property of the Trustees of the Birthplace, and will be spared for a while, but will ultimately be pulled down also to increase the size of the garden.

"Curiously enough, Mr. Edgar Flower, a prominent townsman, is Chairman of the Executive of the Trust, while his son, Mr. Archie Flower, is the Chairman of the Library Committee. It was the latter gentleman who first, and practically unofficially, approached Mr. Carnegie on the subject of the Library, and he suggested as a site a little slice of land between the Technical School and a larger cottage which adjoins the three which are now doomed.

"Exception was taken to this, as the larger cottage is really an old structure, dating from the year before Shakespeare was born. Hence the other cottages were selected.

"'Why people wish to save them,' said the Mayor plaintively yesterday, 'I cannot understand. They are very ugly, and there is nothing Elizabethan about them, for they have not been standing more than a hundred years at the outside.

"'We only propose to erect in their stead a very modest building (see Frontispiece), and one which will be far more in keeping with the atmosphere of the street.'"

"To this view, however, there is very strong opposition, even in Stratford-on-Avon." . . . —Daily Mail, April 21, 1903.

By the above extract, it will be again made plainly evident that the intention of all parties concerned was to entirely demolish the old houses in Henley Street.

26. After the Public Luncheon on April 23 I wished to speak with Mr. Sidney Colvin before he returned to London, but he told me he feared he would have no time to give me. I thought this rather extraordinary, as I had been the first to warn him respecting the intended demolitions in Henley Street, and had received from him the following letter, dated March 14:—
"Dear Madam,—Many thanks for the information contained in your letter of the 12th. I hope that by calling a little more attention to the Carnegie-Flower scheme we may get it modified to the extent of having no new buildings put up in Henley Street.—Yours very faithfully,

"Sidney Colvin."

The letter which Mr. Colvin wrote to the Times on March 22, and which has already been set before the reader, followed this letter to myself. In another letter to me he wrote—

"The only body in the country really fit to have charge of such a site is the National Trust; not a body such as the actual Trustees. But such as they are we must try and prevail with them."

But, after spending nearly the whole day of April 23 with Mr. Archibald D. Flower, Mr. Colvin on his return to London from Stratford penned me the following letter:—

(Copy.)

"British Museum, London, W.C.

"April 24, 1903.

"Dear Miss Corelli,—I was very sorry to be prevented coming to tea with you yesterday. But my time was taken up first making a thorough examination of the debated premises in Henley Street, and next waiting to try and find my friend Stephen Phillips, who was due at the 'Red Horse' at six, but for whom I waited in vain until six-twenty, when it was time to catch my train for London.

"And now, first let me congratulate you again on a speech delivered with a very remarkable beauty of voice and utterance, for which I own I was not prepared.—It was admirable.

"And next, I have to confess, what will not please you, that having carefully examined the houses and gone into all the points of the controverted matter on the spot, I am no longer on your side as I was, and regret that I should have taken part in the public discussion (as I was for long unwilling to do) without first-hand study of the facts and conditions. I find these to be much more complicated than I supposed; the maintenance of the actual 'status quo' (which I should prefer) much more difficult; and the mischief of the proposed scheme much less than it has been represented. So please do not count on me in future as an active ally in this matter.—Yours very truly,

(Signed) Sidney Colvin."

27. It will be noticed that in this letter Mr. Colvin does not say one word about the Shakespearean associations and tradition of Henley Street. Moreover, he says he was "making a thorough examination of the debated premises"—that he "carefully examined the houses" and went "into all the points of the contested matter on the spot." What is mainly regrettable in this episode is that he failed to ascertain the Shakespearean history of the old houses altogether. A very few days after he had written this letter to me full proofs of the indubitable antiquity of the houses in question,
VANDALISM AT STRATFORD-ON-AVON

AND THEIR CONNECTION WITH THE SHAKESPEARE FAMILY WERE INCONTESTABLY ESTABLISHED.

28. The day after the Public Luncheon, I received a letter from Mr. Dr. William Martin, brother of Dr. William Martin, Hon. Sec. of the London Shakespeare Commemoration League, with whom I had had some little correspondence relative to my becoming a member of the League. Dr. William Martin was much interested in the effort I was making to save the old houses, and would have assisted the work more actively but for representations made to him that members of the Flower family belonged to the League. I have never been able to understand why undue consideration for a person or persons should enter into a matter which is purely national, especially into such a matter as affects historical, literary, or archaeological connection with Shakespeare and Shakespearean times. Dr. Martin was, however, seriously hampered in his own intention to uphold the strict preservation of Henley Street, and did the best thing he could do under the peculiar circumstances of the case, by referring it on to his brother. He wrote me a letter containing the subjoined passage:—

"It is indeed time that something were done to preserve intact the relics of that great Elizabethan Era in which the Immortal Bard first saw the light. A union of Shakespeare Societies would do much in bringing about this end."

I should add that Dr. Martin himself visited Stratford-on-Avon and personally inspected the proposed site of the Free Library. He wished to examine the interior of the disputed cottages, but they were locked. Mr. Edward A. Martin's letter to me is here given in full.

THE SELBORNE SOCIETY.

PRESIDENT: THE RIGHT HON. LORD AVEBURY, D.C.L., F.R.S., ETC.

FOUNDED 1885.

"20 HANOVER SQUARE, LONDON, W.

"APRIL 24TH, 1903.

"R. MARSHMAN WATTS, Secretary.

"DEAR MADAM,—I have heard from my brother, of the London Shakespeare League, of the great interest which you feel in regard to the threatened demolition of certain old houses in Stratford.

"At his desire, I have communicated with our President, Lord Avebury, with a view to invoke his assistance in saving the houses if possible. We hold our Annual Meeting and Conversazione on May the 5th, and I have asked his lordship to say a word for the houses. The matter is distinctly one which should have the sympathy of all our members, as the preservation of objects of antiquarian interest lies within the scope of our aims, as will be seen from the heading to this paper.

"In case you could find it convenient to be present at the meeting on the 5th prox., I beg to send you a hearty invitation for that occasion. And if you should be present, I hope you will take an opportunity to bring the
manner to which I have referred, forward.—I am, Madam, yours very
faithfully,  
(Signed)  
EDWARD A. MARTIN.  
"Hon. Sec. to Conversazione Committee."

"Miss MARIE CORELLI."

29. I accepted this invitation, and on the 5th of May, gave a short
Address to the Selborne Society at 20 Hanover Square, London. Lord Avebury
was in the chair. After hearing what I had to say, Lord Avebury, and
Sir George Kekewich, who was also present, agreed to sign a PETITION FOR
DELAY. It must be distinctly understood that DELAY was the only
thing asked for, the site not having been yet personally examined by London
experts. But as the houses were destined to be pulled down as quickly as
possible, DELAY was a plea that Lord Avebury considered might very well
be put forward, being neither unreasonable nor aggressive.

30. At the meeting of the Selborne Society I met Mr. Allen S. Walker,
Hon. Correspondent of the British Archæological Association. He was
much interested, and promised to represent the matter to the various
Societies which he happened to be associated with. He kept his word, and
PETITIONS FOR DELAY were signed at the offices of the British Archæological
Association, the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings, the
London and Middlesex Archæological Association, greatly to my surprise
and gratitude, as I should have hesitated to approach these Societies on
my own account. The request from them all was for DELAY. It has
been asserted that they petitioned for something they knew nothing about,
because they had not visited the site or seen the cottages. When it
is realised that ONLY DELAY was asked for, it will be seen that the
Societies wished to gain time in ORDER TO HAVE THE SITE INSPECTED AND
REPORTED ON.

31. Just at this point, the letter appeared in the Birmingham Daily Post,
which is quoted in Clause 16 of this pamphlet, and WHICH MORE THAN
JUSTIFIED THE EXERTIONS I WAS MAKING TO SAVE WHAT HAD BEEN DOOMED
TO DESTRUCTION. The reader is requested to refer back to the passage
indicated.

32. It will be seen that the ANTIQUITY OF THESE HOUSES HAD ALREADY
BEEN MADE PUBLICLY KNOWN AND THAT THEIR RECORDS WERE IN THE BIRTH-
PLACE, UNDER THE CHARGE OF THE TRUSTEES, who were, nevertheless, going
to DEMOLISH THEM UTTERLY. As soon as I read the account given in the
Birmingham Daily Post, I wrote the following letter to the Morning Post:—

STRANGE DISCOVERY AT STRATFORD.

To The Editor of the Morning Post.

"Sir,—Those of your readers who have followed the press discussion
concerning the preservation of old Henley Street in the aspect under which
it has become familiar to thousands of pilgrims from everywhere will, no
doubt, be considerably interested to hear that the warning against Vandalism has not been given without good cause. The threatened houses next to the Birthplace, which, according to Mr. Edgar Flower, Chairman of the Executive Committee of Trustees, were publicly stated to be ‘Early Victorian’ and historically worthless, are now proved by an impartial investigator and correspondent of the *Birmingham Daily Post* to be of date ‘contemporary with Shakespeare,’ having also ‘some portions much older, and that therefore they ought to be preserved.’ A ‘finely-timbered roof of massive black oak beams, centuries old, some of the rafters being from a foot to fourteen inches in thickness,’ has been discovered, with many other surprising and substantial proofs that these so-called ‘Early Victorian’ tenements are valuable and interesting old property of the Shakespearean period. Mr. Carnegie is to be congratulated in having unconsciously made a lasting addition to the charm surrounding the Birthplace, an addition that is far too precious to be ‘pulled down’ or lost, but that is bound to be carefully preserved by the Trustees who hold their trust on behalf of the nation. It will be well at this juncture for the public to reflect that none of the Trustees or members of the Town Council of Stratford appear to have thought, until now, of the desirability of personally examining the houses doomed to destruction before making plans and concessions. Not one of them seems to have visited the interiors; they were all apparently content with merely glancing over the modernised frontage and echoing Mr. E. Flower’s pronouncement ‘Early Victorian.’ But, as the correspondent of the *Birmingham Daily Post* tells us: ‘The comparatively modern frontage ought not to condemn them, considering how the difficulty was overcome in regard to Shakespeare’s House, which had been altered and “pulled about” by successive owners before it was purchased on behalf of the nation.’ As matters at present stand the proposed plans for the alteration of Henley Street can scarcely remain as they originally were set forth, and in face of the numerous petitions being sent in to the Stratford Town Council on Tuesday it is to be hoped that excellent body will grant a further delay for the consideration of public opinion. Much concern is felt for the quaint little half-timbered dwelling of proved 1563 date, which, according to the proposed design, is to be actually swallowed up and ‘built into’ the modern brick and mortar of the Free Library. Worse architectural taste could hardly be imagined, and the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings is sending a protest to the Town Council with the esteemed name of Philip Norman, F.S.A., to enforce it. The dates of this old house are all in order, the leases and names of its owners are extant, and as it ‘saw Shakespeare through’ it is so historically interesting that it claims every right to stand alone and be carefully supported, so that it may be seen by itself without any modern surroundings. We may take it that Mr. Carnegie himself would be one of the first to wish this, for he has, with the utmost good nature, expressed his indifference as to the ‘site’ of the Library, and he
has also said that he certainly 'never gave any instructions to interfere with any Shakespearean relics.' He has trusted 'the local authorities,' who, as is now proved, have not till now personally examined the property under discussion. Had no controversy arisen it would all have been demolished during the Festival Fortnight! Petitions from the British Archaeological Association, signed by Dr. Walter de Gray Birch, F.S.A., T. Cato Worsfold, F.R.Hist.Soc., C. H. Evelyn White, F.S.A., and others; from the London and Middlesex Archaeological Institution, signed by Dr. Edwin Freshfield, F.S.A., Charles Welch, M.A., F.S.A., and others; from the Society for Protection of Ancient Buildings, from the London Shakespearean Commemoration League, from the Whitefriars Club (headed by the Countess of Warwick), and from the Selborne Society, signed by Lord Avebury (formerly Sir John Lubbock) and Sir George Kekewich, with other appeals, are being sent to the Stratford Town Council to-day in the hope that they may be induced during their sitting to-morrow (Tuesday) to listen to the public voice which pleads for strict preservation of everything in Stratford that is even remotely Shakespearean.—Yours, etc., Marie Corelli.

"May 10."

33. Some alarm was evidently excited among the Trustees at the "discovery" by the press, of what should have been well known to themselves. Mr. Edgar Flower, Chairman of the Executive Committee, and Mr. Archie Flower, Chairman of the Free Library Committee, both rushed into print.

STRANGE DISCOVERY IN STRATFORD.

To the Editor of the Morning Post.

Mr. Edgar Flower's letter.

"SIR,—Noticing Miss Corelli's letter under the above heading, I beg to say that if in proceeding with the alterations of the cottages, after removing the decidedly new buildings, any portion proves of sufficient interest and value, the retention of such portion will, of course, be considered, but the details of removal and preservation have not yet been decided, nor can they be until certain portions are exposed. Though we hope to find it possible to preserve some very interesting features, the buildings have purposely been left in statu quo to allow inspection, but it is impossible to follow the advice of every irresponsible person. As I said at the meeting of the Trustees nothing would be done without careful and earnest consideration. The matter is quite distinct from the question of the Free Library.—Yours, etc.,

"EDGAR FLOWER, Chairman Executive Committee,
"Shakespeare's Birthplace Trustees.

"The Hill, Stratford-on-Avon, May 11."
THE "IRRESPONSIBLE" PERSONS IN THE MATTER WOULD APPEAR TO BE THE TRUSTEES, RATHER THAN ANY OTHERS, AS IT IS PLAIN THEY SHOULD HAVE BEEN AWARE OF THE HISTORICAL VALUE OF PROPERTY THE DEEDS OF WHICH WERE IN THEIR OWN CHARGE.

Mr. Archie Flower wrote to the Birmingham Daily Post thus:—

TO THE EDITOR OF THE DAILY POST.

"SIR,—With reference to this matter, it is of importance, as you have pointed out, to understand that the question of treatment of the two cottages nearest Shakespeare's House is one which has to be dealt with by the Birthplace Trustees, and is entirely distinct from the question of the Free Library site, which is in the hands of the Town Council.

"While referring to this latter matter, Miss Corelli has stated in the press that 'if the proposed alterations are carried out not a scrap of the original side of Henley Street, as thousands of pilgrims have known and seen it, will remain.' In the interest of accuracy in so important a subject, I must be allowed to qualify that statement.

"All who have taken the trouble to inquire into the proposal of the Library Committee know perfectly well that it is not intended to put up a modern red-brick structure, but to preserve all that is capable of preservation of the original old house (now a china shop), and to fill up the ugly vacant space with a building in like character. In fact, the suggestion is, to quote the words of Mr. Wilson Barrett, 'to restore as nearly as possible to its olden form.'

"It is true that in order to carry out these alterations it will be necessary to remove the ugly modern red-brick shop front which 'thousands' of pilgrims (of this generation) have known and seen'—but will anyone regret this? Mr. Stanley has lately been restoring, enlarging, and adapting to modern requirements his beautiful old house at the corner of High Street and Ely Street, but this also involved the removal of a comparatively modern stucco front. The work was admirably carried out under the direction of Mr. E. G. Holtom, and Miss Corelli is contributing towards the cost. The suggestion of the Library Committee is to carry out exactly the same principle in Henley Street. Mr. Holtom is the architect employed, the only difference being that he is working in consultation with Mr. Cossins, who represents the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings. Why should praise be given to one restoration while the other is called 'another act of spoliation which nobody wants'?

"The report of the Library Committee will be submitted to the Town Council on Tuesday next. I hope and think that when the general public have read this they will agree that due consideration has been given to

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1 See Frontispiece of intended Library before discussion.

2 This is the house which Mr. Flower wrote of on Feb. 28 as to be "pulled down," in order to "utilise the space for a Free Library."
sentiment, and that the matter has been approached with the care and prudence which it deserves.  

ARCHIE FLOWER.

"STRATFORD-ON-AVON, May 11."

34. The Birmingham Daily Post meantime commented on its correspondent's discovery as follows:—

(From the "Birmingham Daily Post," Monday, May 11, 1903.)

"The article which we published on Saturday as to the ancient character of two of the four cottages in Henley Street, Stratford-on-Avon, that are marked for destruction by the Shakespeare Trustees, has opened the eyes of a good many people who had imagined that the cottages were of no historic interest or value. Not a few inhabitants of Stratford who had taken not the slightest concern in the controversy over the retention or otherwise of the buildings have now shown an interest in the matter highly creditable, and on Saturday several were seeking admission to the humble tenements nearest the Birthplace, but the doors were kept locked, and their curiosity went ungratified. Many persons have hastily condemned the cottages as 'only fit to be pulled down,' without even taking the trouble to look inside them. They have simply judged by outside appearance, and it would be curious to know how many of the Birthplace Trustees, who have come into possession of the property through the thoughtful generosity of Mr. Andrew Carnegie, and who have lately acquiesced in the order for their demolition, have ever taken the trouble to go inside the cottages. Their intention was laudable enough, no doubt—to increase the area of Shakespeare's garden, and thereby widen the distance between the Birthplace and the adjacent dwelling-houses as a precaution against fire. But why all this anxiety as to a possible danger at one end, when at the other there is a much larger dwelling-house constantly occupied, and quite as close to the Birthplace as the cottages referred to? The Trustees, by retaining the two old tenements in their own occupation, can adopt precautions against fire in the same way as they have done at the Birthplace. A second visit made on Saturday has confirmed our correspondent's view as to the antiquity of two of the cottages. The roof timbers and the wall framing are quite as ancient in appearance as those in Shakespeare's House, and it is hoped that before any act of destruction is commenced the Trustees will call in a competent archaeologist to thoroughly examine and report upon the buildings. . . . It is an accepted fact that these cottages were part of the Hornby property—a name intimately associated with the Birthplace from the earliest times—while we have the

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1 It should be noted that some of Messrs. Flower's malt-houses, where fires are often kept burning night and day, are in particularly dangerous proximity to the Birthplace.
assurance, also, from a gentleman holding an official position in Stratford, that they at one time belonged to Shakespeare’s granddaughter, Mrs. Nash. It cannot be too plainly stated that this matter has nothing whatever to do with the erection of a ‘Carnegie Library.’ The proposed site of that building is some little distance away, and concerns solely the Stratford Corporation, who may be trusted to give proper attention to the earnest and sensible plea that Green’s House, erected in 1563 (now a China shop with an admittedly modern front) should not be sacrificed. The contention of those who have the best interests of Stratford at heart, and who are mindful of the responsibilities which devolve upon them as the custodians of Shakespeare’s Birthplace and of his Burialplace, is that nothing should henceforth be disturbed or demolished that was in existence in the Poet’s time, and upon which, possibly, his eyes may have gazed at some time or other.”

35. When the antiquity of the old houses in Henley Street was thoroughly proved and established, I wrote a letter to Mr. Andrew Carnegie, congratulating him that by purchasing these buildings he had unconsciously secured to the Birthplace Trustees a genuine bit of Shakespearean property, and I asked for an interview with him. He replied, completely ignoring the fact of the discovery of the antiquity of the cottages, which, as he makes some ado about being an admirer of Shakespeare, one would have thought might have interested and pleased him. He wrote that he had “nothing to do with the site,” a fact I already knew, and told me it was no use “troubling” to see him as he had nothing to say on the subject. Whereupon I wrote again, suggesting that if he lent his ear to one side of a question, it was scarcely fair to close it to the other, and that as I knew he saw Mr. Archibald D. Flower constantly, he might as well see me once. Finally he arranged to see me on Tuesday, May the 12th, the day on which the Stratford Town Council met, under Mr. Archibald D. Flower, to decide the Free Library Scheme.

36. My interview with Mr. Carnegie took place at the Langham Hotel. I am glad to say there was a witness to it in the person of a gentleman who was much interested in the preservation of Henley Street, and who very kindly accompanied me. The interview furnished me with considerable amusement, because, as Mr. Carnegie did all the talking, it was not necessary for me to speak. The first few words he uttered concerning Henley Street showed me that he was in absolute ignorance of the locality of the houses, and their history. Considerable fault was found with persons, who for love of English tradition and Shakespearean association, sought to save the old cottages and maintain the simple character of the street, because, so it was said, they “had not inspected the site.” But Mr. Carnegie was exactly in the same category. He had not “inspected the site.” Moreover, he said he did not care about the site. But he offered the incongruous spectacle of a professing admirer of Shakespeare who “did not care” about houses which
Shakespeare saw and perhaps loved in his lifetime. He preferred a Library to those houses, and plainly said so. He told me he had paid "twenty-three hundred pound" for the cottages, and had handed them over "without conditions." I remember particularly his expression, "twenty-three hundred pound," because it struck me as unusual. He furthermore stated that if Henley Street were "as old as Christ" he would pull it all down, if any part of it were in dangerous proximity to the Birthplace, in the way of menace from fire. He was and is, of course, not aware of the dangerous proximity of certain malt-houses, which belong to Messrs. Flower, and which are truly such a positive menace to the Birthplace, especially when fires are kept going in them night and day, that it is astonishing the Trustees do not have them removed, together with the "modern-antique" dwelling on the farther side, which is much nearer to the Birthplace than the old Shakespearean cottages lately threatened with destruction, and which has both light and fire, being an inhabited house. Mr. Carnegie, however, did not wish to hear any explanation of the position, or to receive any statement of proved facts. He implied that Shakespeare himself would most probably like a Free Library better than the old houses of his relatives and friends, and this was the final impression I received of himself and his humour. It was however distinctly evident that he had been strongly prejudiced against me by misrepresentation of both myself and my motives,—too strongly prejudiced to have the reasonable justice of a well-balanced and impartial mind that is honestly willing to consider both sides. Nevertheless I was glad to have personally seen him on the matter, as I would not have it thought by the many who are interested in the preservation of all Shakespearean associations, that I had left any stone on the way unturned.

37. Before my interview with Mr. Carnegie, I had been told by Mr. Yoxall, M.P., of the existence of a Society for the Preservation of Historic Sites and Places of Beauty or Interest called The National Trust. I enrolled myself as a Life-Member of this Society, paying the Fee (Twenty Guineas) for this privilege. I had hoped and believed that this Society would certainly have come forward actively to save the old buildings in Henley Street. However, its members were generally quiescent, although a piece of Shakespearean association might laudably have roused them to action. My point however, in becoming a member, was not to seek any outside assistance more or less tardily given, but to merely enable myself to make an anonymous offer with respect to the old house known as Birch's china shop, traditionally supposed to be the dwelling of Thomas Greene, possibly own cousin to Shakespeare.

Through my Birmingham solicitors therefore, I offered, as an anonymous member of the National Trust, the sum of £1000 (One Thousand Pounds) for Birch's 1563 house, with the further proposition to hand the said house over to the Birthplace Trustees for ever, to be preserved by them as an "object of art and antiquity illustrative of the life and times of William Shakespeare" as set
VANDALISM AT STRATFORD-ON-AVON

FORWARD IN CLAUSE 6 OF THE SHAKESPEARE BIRTHPLACE TRUST PARLIAMENTARY ACT, 54 VICT. CH. III.

38. On the 12th of May the Town Council met to "discuss" the Free Library Scheme. Those present were fully aware that the whole matter had been settled by Mr. Archibald D. Flower and his colleagues at a private meeting which took place before they entered the public room of the Town Hall, and that the "discussion" was merely an addenda. The report of the meeting is here subjoined. The Petitions from the various Societies were handed in, and set aside. A letter urging delay from the Earl of Warwick was left unread. An earnest and courteous appeal from myself was similarly treated, as was a letter from Mr. Yoxall, M.P.

DISCUSSION RE ERECTION OF FREE LIBRARY IN HENLEY STREET, STRATFORD-ON-AVON.

RESULT OF TOWN COUNCIL MEETING, MAY 12, 1903.

"After the Petitions and Letters of Protest had been read, the Town Clerk (Mr. R. Lunn) read a letter from an anonymous member of the National Trust offering through Messrs. Balden and Son, Solicitors, to purchase Birch's house for the sum of One Thousand Pounds (£1000).

"Councillor Everard proposed that the Clerk should reply, saying that the property was not for sale.

"Councillor Kendall seconded it, and the resolution was carried unanimously.

"The minutes of the report of the Free Library were then read.

"Councillor Flower, as Chairman of the Committee, said:—'As Mr. Sidney Colvin's name has been mentioned in the report, I think it only fair to quote his words in a letter to myself (Mr. Flower), in which Mr. Colvin said: 'On my first visit to Stratford my first impulse was to write then and there to the papers and acknowledge my change of views, explaining the reason.' Mr. Colvin then went on to show how difficult that was without illustrations, and closed his letter with these words: 'Did you not say there was to be a meeting to settle the next step to take? You are quite at liberty to quote my opinion. The objections which naturally present themselves from a distance, when the scheme of alterations is propounded in general terms, in great part disappear when the existing state of things is examined on the spot.' This visit to the site has changed his views and, in the same way, personal investigation, in general with those who know the actual proposals, has convinced inquirers that the Committee are not working on the wrong line. This question has been before the public for a long time, and very prominently for the last three months. Every facility has been given for investigation: but yesterday it was announced that petitions of protest were to be sent to the Council by various important Societies. As one petition appears to be from the "Society for the Protection of Ancient
Buildings," one of whose own appointed architects, Mr. Cossins, who failed to inform his Society of the intended alterations, is advising us, and as no officials of any of these Societies have sought information from any member of the Committee, it is rather difficult to understand upon what foundations and facts these petitions would rest. We have now heard them read,\(^1\) and we find them mostly dealing with the matter of demolition, which is not intended by our Committee in any way. The question of how these petitions arose was largely cleared up at a meeting held this morning, when an interview was granted to a Mr. Allen S. Walker, of London. This gentleman explained that he had heard an address on the subject of this controversy, delivered at a meeting of the Selborne Society, and had signed a petition there; and that he had arranged for identical petitions signed, first of all, by members of the Archeological Society, then by the members of the London and Middlesex Archeological Society, and by some of the members of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings; and he told us that he had come to Stratford, on behalf of these Societies, to present their petitions. He has presented these petitions, and said also that he was sent down or came down, to obtain information, as none of those who had sent him were in possession of the facts at first hand. The Committee gave Mr. Walker all the possible information, and in return they asked him his opinion on behalf of those Societies he represented. In reply to the questions put by members of the Committee, Mr. Walker said:—

(A) That it was evidently necessary that the vacant space should be built upon.

(B) That the modern warehouses at the back might well be converted into a reading-room.

(C) That these together with Birch's house would be more appropriately used as a library than as a shop or public-house as heretofore.

(D) That in adopting Birch's shop for the purpose, it should be touched as little as possible, and that the present modern brick shop-front should on no account be moved.\(^2\)

"In short, after a very friendly conversation, the only difference between Mr. Walker's ideas and those of the Committee was practically in the details of restoration work. In questions of this kind there is room for immense variety of opinion, and it is impossible to please everybody. For example, Mr. Wilson Barrett would like to see the whole of Henley Street bought up and restored as in olden times; while Mr. Walker, as representing these Societies, advocates almost exactly the reverse. It appears then that the general scheme of the Committee meets with the approval of those who have examined on the spot; and if, in working out the details of restoration these Societies will assist us, their help will, I have no doubt, be most gladly welcomed by this Council.

\(^1\) Here it will be seen that Mr. Flower denies his own statement of Feb. 28. See Clause 14.

\(^2\) It is now in process of complete alteration.
"I beg, therefore, to move that the general scheme as foreshadowed in the Committee's report be approved by the Council."

"COUNCILLOR WINTER said:—I feel somewhat handicapped in dealing with this matter as I have not had a 'Varsity education, and that seems to be a necessary thing when talking of ancient buildings; but I second the motion with much pleasure, because I feel I am voicing the unanimous views of the Council, when I say that the Free Library Committee should be heartily supported. We feel complete confidence in what they have done, and in what they propose to do, not only because they are practical men themselves, but because they are working in consultation with an eminent architect. As Councillor Flower has said, he is bound to see that all the ancient features in Birch's house are carefully preserved, I need say no more.

"ALDERMAN SMALLWOOD, in supporting the resolution, said:—Mr. Flower has well expressed the wishes of the Committee and also of the Council, who to-day will express it by vote. I think we shall be able to erect such a building as will give satisfaction to every variety of critic, both of Stratford-on-Avon and also all over the world itself.

"COUNCILLOR EVERARD said:—I should like to support the proposition, if only to show the sympathy this Council has in the difficulties the Library Committee have already met with; and, further, to show that the Council still have unbounded confidence in them.

"COUNCILLOR KENDALL said:—I should like to express my conviction that the Committee have done the very best they could, and I hope they will be unanimously supported in the matter. With regard to the offer to purchase Birch's house, I may say that, though we may be hard up in Stratford, yet we are not open to bribes. (Hear, hear.) I hope the reporters will take a note of this and let it reach the eyes of those who made it.

"ALDERMAN HAKVES said:—While supporting the resolution I think we are doing the right thing in accepting the opinions and advice of those representing the Learned Societies Mr. Flower has mentioned.¹ I think that step would be more likely to satisfy the world generally than anything we have yet done.

"The Mayor (COUNCILLOR BIRD) said:—Before putting the resolution to the meeting, I should like to say that we all thoroughly appreciate the interest which the Literary, Archæological, and Dramatic world appear to take in Stratford and Shakespearean associations, as evidenced by these petitions, of which we have this day been the recipients. We cannot ignore their importance, for we recognise that Shakespeare and Shakespeare's town have a world-wide interest. Equally, therefore, with the petitioners, I believe and know that every member of this Council is anxious to preserve and, where practicable, to restore everything of an ancient, histrical, or Shakespearean character, in and around Stratford; while they have everything to

¹ The opinions and reports of the learned Societies have been almost if not entirely disregarded.
lose and nothing whatever to gain by destroying ancient landmarks in the birth-town of our great Poet. I hope and feel, therefore, that the vote you are about to give will be after full consideration of the whole circumstances of the case, and with, perhaps, rather a heavier feeling of responsibility than usual. If you thoroughly believe in the proposed action of the Library Committee, you will of course endorse their report. If, on the other hand, you feel that delay is advisable, or that the site we have selected should be changed, all you have to do is to refer it back. But in any case, I hope and feel that there will be a substantial vote,—one that will enable the Library Committee in the future to carry out whatever you dictate, with the fullest confidence,—confidence in their work, and confident that they are doing what is your wish and what I hope will prove to be the wish of the world at large. I now put the report for confirmation, proposed by the Chairman (Councillor Flower), and seconded by Councillor Winter. Those in favour kindly hold up their hands that I may see who they are.

“Carried unanimously.

“COUNCILLOR FLOWER said:—I should like to say that I feel sure my COMMITTEE WILL BE ONLY TOO GLAD TO PICK THE BRAINS OF THESE SOCIETIES IN CARRYING OUT ANY DETAILS OF THE SCHEME, THE PRINCIPLE OF WHICH THEY HAVE ESTABLISHED TO-DAY.”

39. I was in London, and the result of the Town Council meeting was conveyed to me in a letter from the Mayor, in which he regretted the matter had not been carried more satisfactorily to the views of myself and those interested with me in the preservation of Henley Street. On the morning after the meeting, namely, on the 13th of May, at five o’clock, before the town was awake and stirring, two of the houses in Henley Street, fortunately the more modern ones, were stripped of their roofs, and the demolition was commenced.

40. Meanwhile Mr. Sidney Colvin, finding himself quoted by Mr. Flower at the Town Council meeting, and considerably annoyed that he should have condemned the ancient cottages as ‘Early Victorian’ when they were proved Shakespearean, wrote the following letter to the Times:

THE PROPOSED ALTERATIONS AT STRATFORD-ON-AVON.

To the Editor of the Times.

“SIR,—Last March you were good enough to print a letter from me on this subject, pleading for a reconsideration of certain plans entertained by the Town Council of Stratford-on-Avon, or at least for the delay of their execution. By a report which appears in your issue this morning I see that at a meeting of that body yesterday I was quoted as having since then entirely changed my mind on the subject. That I have partly changed it is true; will your readers bear with me while I explain in as few words as I can the reasons of the change? On the general principle that in a case of this kind the maintenance of the architectural status quo is to be desired and the intrusion of new features and new associations to be avoided, it is
Birch's Shop: Side Gable, which will be hidden by Library.

Altering Birch's Shop: At Work on the Front.

"Adapting" Work: Workmen engaged on the 1563 House. Old Gable will be hidden in Free Library.
VANDALISM AT STRATFORD-ON-AVON

needless to say I stand firm; and, on the information before me when I wrote, the case for applying this principle to the Henley Street site seemed very strong. But now that I have visited and carefully examined the site, I am convinced that to keep things as they are is far more difficult than could be realised from a distance, and that the objections to the proposed alterations are less grave.

"There are two parts to the scheme which are quite independent of each other, and should be kept quite separate in the reader's mind. One concerns the row of four cottages adjoining the Birthplace garden; the other concerns a china shop abutting on the last of the four, together with a vacant space or gap next beyond it.

"The four cottages are of the humble, decently proportioned, aesthetically harmless type, red-walled and red-roofed, which one is always glad to see preserved in old towns or villages for fear of their being replaced by worse. In none of their external features certainly can they be more than one hundred years old at the outside. They are now, by the gift of Mr. Carnegie, the property of the Birthplace Trustees; and it is proposed to pull them down, and throw the ground they occupy into the Birthplace garden. The chief motive in favour of this course is the better protection of the Birthplace itself from fire; the chief motive against it is, or was until a few days ago, the general desirability of not disturbing modest buildings to which people have got accustomed during the best part of a century; and this motive has now been reinforced by the alleged discovery in two of the cottages of constructive timbers as old as the seventeenth century. Had these cottages not been acquired for the Trust, one of them, at anyrate, was about to be modernised and turned into a restaurant of some show; it was a good thing to stop this; it will also be a good thing to safeguard the Birthplace as much as possible from the risks of fire. Whether to this end it will really be best to pull the cottages down, or to keep standing, even if tenantless, those two of them, at anyrate, which are stated to contain really ancient work, is a matter on which the Birthplace Trustees are bound to take, and no doubt will take, the most careful advice.

"The other matter is a more complicated one—that, namely, of the china shop which joins on to the row of cottages and the gap of vacant ground (the site of a burnt-out house) next to it. The china shop belongs to the Town Council; the gap has been bought by Mr. Edgar Flower, and it has been decided to build the new Library on the joint site. Something had to be done. The gap at present shows an ugly back view of one wing of the Technical School, and it was desirable to fill it decorously. The china shop is of real antiquarian interest, dating by documentary evidence from before Shakespeare's birth, and containing several well-preserved interior portions of its ancient timber construction. But it has been pulled about and confused with later additions, both internal and external; the ancient timber-and-plaster front has been destroyed and wholly replaced, not merely masked, as often happens, by a late front in red brick; and the whole structure is in a
tumble-down condition. To let it perish would be a sin; to disengage and preserve what is old and interesting involves in any case much change and remodelling of what now exists. The plan decided on is to effect such a change and remodelling by incorporating the ancient parts, when they shall have been disengaged, in a new building designed to cover both the site of the house itself and the gap next it, and to be used for the purpose of the Carnegie Library. The question whether this course is desirable or not can be argued on grounds both practical and sentimental. Sharing the instinctive sentiment which has been so vehemently expressed against it, I find it difficult, after studying all the conditions on the spot, to see what alternative treatment would not be open to at least equal practical objections—provided always that the work is carried out under the most cautious and experienced direction. Mr. Flower’s sketch-plan, as exhibited in the china-shop window during the Stratford week, shows an extremely modest timber-and-plaster front of two low storeys, quite in keeping with the earlier architecture of the place. If it were certain both that the interior ancient work would be preserved to the utmost, and that the new front would be no more obtrusive than Mr. Flower’s sketch, cultivated opinion might, I should say, acquiesce, though without enthusiasm, in the scheme. But there are sad warnings already in the street, particularly in the shape of some pretentious modern would-be Elizabethan shops over the way. And in a matter which interests in some degree the whole English-speaking world, the local authorities should certainly carry out the promise implied in Mr. A. Flower’s reported speech of yesterday, and take into their councils representatives of such bodies as the Society of Antiquaries, the Royal Institute of British Architects, the National Trust, and the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings.—I am, etc.,

Sidney Colvin.

“May 13.”

As a matter of fact, the advice of the experts has been more or less set aside, and Birch’s shop, which—as Mr. Colvin says, “is of real antiquarian interest”—is now in process of adaptation to the uses of a Public Library, where there may be some danger of fire.

41. Mr. Allen S. Walker, of the British Archæological Association, was extremely indignant at the hasty measures for destruction which had been adopted on the morning after the meeting of the Town Council. Numerous other persons were equally indignant with him, including the Earl of Warwick, Lord Balcarres, and many more. It was decided, after careful consultation of the Parliamentary Act, that it might be possible to bring an action against the Birthplace Trustees for breach of trust, and Counsel’s advice was taken on the subject.

42. The Morning Post of May 14 gave the following letter dealing with Mr. Edgar Flower’s statement respecting the ancient cottages, a letter, which, though anonymous, helps to embody much in a few words.
FANCY SKETCH OF PROPOSED LIBRARY by Mr. Edgar Flower,
As suggested after the First Plan (see Frontispiece) had been abandoned, owing to Miss Corelli’s Action.

This Sketch shows the Street as it would have been if the Cottages originally belonging to the Shakespeare Family had been demolished.

1. Is the Birthplace. 2 and 3. show the existing space of Garden, and the additional “clear space” to have been obtained by pulling down the Shakespearean Cottages. 4. Is Birch’s Shop “adapted” to a Library. 5. The vacant space filled up by portion of the Library. 6. The existing Technical School.
PRESENT IDEA OF FREE LIBRARY.
SKETCHED FROM THE DRAWINGS BY MR. EDGAR FLOWER, NOW ON EXHIBITION IN HENLEY STREET.

1. The two Cottages, formerly one House, belonging to the Shakespeare Family, which Miss Corelli's protest has saved from demolition.
2. Garden where the two more modern Cottages, on old foundations, have been destroyed.
3. Birch's Shop "straightened up" and modernised.
4. The Library, running into Birch's Shop.
5. The existing Technical Institute.
STRANGE DISCOVERY AT STRATFORD.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE Morning Post.

"SIR,—Under the above heading I have just read a letter from Mr. Edgar Flower, Chairman of the Executive Committee of Shakespeare’s Birthplace Trustees. I am not sufficiently conversant with the pros and cons of controversy raging in Stratford-on-Avon to say whether the Trustees of Shakespeare’s Birthplace have neglected their national duty or whether they have not. I can, however, quite understand the placidity of temper of any set of gentlemen being considerably upset on being told, as they have been by Miss Marie Corelli, as she alone can say it, THAT THEY ARE NOT FIT FOR THEIR DUTIES. Mr. Flower must remember, as Chairman of such a responsible Trust, that he is a public person and is open to criticism, AND HE HAS NO RIGHT IN FAIR AND GENTLEMANLY CONVERSATION TO CALL ANYONE AN ‘IRRESPONSIBLE PERSON,’ AS HE DOES IN HIS LETTER OF THE 11TH INST., SIMPLY BECAUSE HE OR SHE OBJECTS TO THE WAY IN WHICH HE AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE HAVE DISCHARGED THEIR NATIONAL TRUST. WHEN THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE TAKES TO DISPARAGING A CRITIC IT LOOKS VERY MUCH AS IF THE DAY WAS GOING AGAINST THE SUPPOSED TRUSTEES OF SHAKESPEARE’S BIRTHPLACE.—Yours, etc., FAIRPLAY.

"May 13."

I may venture to put it plainly to the unprejudiced reader as to whether the Executive Committee of a National Trust, under Act of Parliament, entitled THE SHAKESPEARE’S BIRTHPLACE TRUST ACT, are justified—

Firstly: In deciding to ENTIRELY DEMOLISH and clear away the Custodian’s Cottage, which was in existence when the Parliamentary Act was passed, without any consideration as to whether they had the right to do so (see their meeting on Feb. 4, 1903), and admittedly being in such a condition of ignorance as to their position, that an appeal was made to Sir Theodore Martin on the subject, result being, according to a statement made by Mr. Archibald D. Flower to Lord Warwick:—“At one time it was intended to set back the Custodian’s Cottage, but Sir Theodore Martin on being consulted, advised the Trustees that he considered they had not power to do this.”

Secondly: In deciding to ENTIRELY DEMOLISH and clear away genuine Shakespearean cottages, formerly one house, and the property of Shakespeare’s granddaughter, while holding under their care and in their possession, FOR THE NATION, the ancient deeds authenticating the said property. For the Parliamentary Act of 1891 clearly states that “It shall be lawful” for the Trustees to acquire “FROM TIME TO TIME, IF AND AS OPPORTUNITY MAY ARISE, ANY HOUSES OR LANDS WHICH ARE OF NATIONAL INTEREST AS BEING ASSOCIATED WITH THE LIFE OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.”
Thirdly: In deciding to alter and adapt for the purposes of a Free Library the old house known as Birch's "crock" shop, genuinely of the Shakespearean time, and proved to have been built in 1563, according to the leases extant, and in refusing to consider, with the aid of the Corporation (many of the members of which are Trustees), the offer of £1000 made to them for the purchase of the said Shakespearean house, in order that it should be handed over to them intact, as part of the Birthplace Trust, the Parliamentary Act clearly stating that "it shall be lawful for the Trustees to receive donations of land, buildings, money, books, pictures, etc., and objects of art or antiquity, illustrative of the life, times, and works of William Shakespeare."

In no part of the Parliamentary Act is it stated that the Trustees have power to refuse such donations. But Birch's shop being "Corporation" property, the Corporation, including those members who are Trustees, refused to sell, while the Trustees, including those members who are of the Corporation, referred the matter to the Corporation, i.e. mostly themselves, who repeated their own refusal. Thus it will be seen how the Trustees and the Corporation worked the matter together, though, as the Earl of Warwick expressed it, "a Trustee and a member of the Corporation ought to weigh well his position relative to both these responsibilities, so that they do not conflict."

It has been very reasonably suggested by the many distinguished individuals who have interested themselves in the matter, that under the foregoing circumstances a new Parliamentary Act should be devised for the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, whereby no member of the Corporation shall be a Trustee inasmuch as municipal convenience has been considered more by the Town Council of 1903 than the public appeal for a higher estimate of national sentiment and feeling concerning the few remaining genuine Shakespearean associations which are invaluable to Great Britain and to the world.

43. On the 11th of May, the day before the meeting of the Town Council to decide on the Free Library Scheme, and before my interview with Mr. Carnegie, I had received the following telegram from Mr. Carl Hentschel, President of the O.P. (Old Playgoers) Club:

"In view of the indignation roused by the action of the Stratford Council in desecrating the Birth street of Shakespeare, could you consent to address a meeting of the O.P. Club, an enthusiastic body of playgoers and first-nighters numbering over eight hundred, next Sunday evening or the following Sunday? I as President should feel greatly honoured if you could consent."

I wired a reply, accepting the invitation, and determined to set the whole matter before the O.P. Club in a fresh effort to save Birch's house (the 1563 dwelling), for I felt that I had for the immediate moment saved the other threatened bit of Shakespearean property, i.e. the two cottages which were
formerly the house of Shakespeare's granddaughter. Mr. Hentschel thereupon announced in the press that I would speak on "The National Trust at Stratford-on-Avon" the following Sunday, the 17th inst.

44. I gave my Address on "The National Trust at Stratford-on-Avon" to the O.F. Club in the Hall of the Criterion, London, on Sunday evening, May 17. My view of the Henley Street position was very generally endorsed by my audience, and in the reports given by the press, the general tone of feeling was the same, i.e. that Henley Street should not be altered in its long-familiar aspect. Mr. Edgar Flower, meanwhile, held a meeting of Trustees at the Birthplace on May 14, reported in the Birmingham Daily Gazette of May 16, in which he admitted the "INDISPUTABLE PROOF" of the SHAKESPEAREAN VALUE of the cottages, which he had himself stated on February 4 were to be ENTIRELY DEMOLISHED.

HENLEY STREET COTTAGES TO BE SAVED.

"Mr. Edgar Flower presided at a special meeting of the Executive Committee of the Shakespeare's Birthplace Trustees, held yesterday, when the subject of the treatment of two of the cottages presented by Mr. Andrew Carnegie came up for further consideration. It was reported that during the last few days, by the removal of the adjoining buildings and the stripping of the internal plaster inside the tenements contiguous to the Birthplace, INDISPUTABLE PROOF WAS FORTHCOMING THAT MOST OF THE ORIGINAL ANCIENT TIMBER-WORK REMAINED. It is hoped that means will be found to carry out the main idea of protecting the Birthplace by isolating and safeguarding from fire the two cottages, which, in their various stages of architecture, are undoubtedly of very great interest. The gift of Mr. Carnegie, therefore, is of even greater value than was at first contemplated, and Miss Corelli will derive some satisfaction from the knowledge that in a measure her strenuous efforts have met with success."—Birmingham Daily Gazette, May 16, 1903.

45. Attention was now concentrated more publicly on the matter, and after consultation with Counsel, it was decided that it would be possible to show BREACH OF TRUST on the part of the Birthplace Trustees, in attempting to deal arbitrarily with property, the Shakespearean value of which, despite their possession of the deeds pertaining to it, they were PROFESSIONALLY IGNORANT. Some gentlemen connected with the British Archaeological Association consented to take up this view of the matter, and to proceed in law against the full body of Trustees under their corporate name, securing if possible the fiat of the Attorney-General.

46. This was accordingly done, and the fiat of the Attorney-General duly obtained. Legal proceedings were commenced, and had the desired effect of staying the demolitions in Henley Street, for a short period, till further inquiries were made into the position.
47. With the commencement of these legal proceedings, the Executive Committee and the Trustees suddenly made it known that the cottages in Henley Street were not yet handed over to them by Mr. Carnegie! The doors of the cottages were locked, and the Town-Clerk given the key in charge. To inquirers wishing to see the interior of the former property of Shakespeare's granddaughter, the statement was made that it "did not yet belong to the Trustees." The reader is requested to compare this statement with Clause 12 of this pamphlet, where the meeting of Trustees on February 4 is given, and when Mr. Edgar Flower plainly stated that Mr. Carnegie's gift "had been thankfully accepted."

48. It should be distinctly understood that whereas the cottages were purchased by Mr. Carnegie, the old house of Birch, dated 1563, belonged to the Corporation. Many of the Trustees are members of the Corporation. Many members of the Corporation are Trustees. In erecting the Free Library, therefore, the Corporation, as Corporation, could use Birch's shop, but could not trespass on any portion of the land belonging to the Trustees. But now it was set forth that the land did not yet belong to the Trustees, because Mr. Carnegie had not yet given it.

49. The question naturally suggests itself: If the property had not yet been given to the Trustees by Mr. Carnegie, by what right did they, or the Free Library Committee, commence to destroy houses not yet belonging to them, on the 13th of May at 5 a.m.?

50. An observation on this state of things was made very aptly by Lord Warwick, himself a Trustee, to the effect that "if at present the Shakespeare Trustees have no possession of the property which Mr. Carnegie proposes to convey to them, it will be time enough to consider what is to be done when the Trustees have possession."

51. The declaration that the property did not yet belong to the Trustees rendered legal proceedings useless, therefore the intended action was withdrawn. As soon as it was withdrawn, the work in Henley Street recommenced. Lord Warwick, on making inquiry of Mr. Archibald D. Flower as to how the matter of the Carnegie gift really stood at this stage of the proceedings, received the reply that, "Carnegie bought all four cottages; part of the land was required to improve the Library site. Referring to the two cottages which the Trustees had wished to acquire, Carnegie wrote to Sir Arthur Hodgson offering them to the Trustees,—he added, 'This ground to be added and preserved as part of the Birthplace property. Deeds satisfactory to you will be duly executed by me.' Knowing that he had thus written, and also that he had paid for the cottages, the Trustees spoke of his offer as a gift. The formal conveyance is, I believe, now prepared, and will be duly signed, and this conveys the property absolutely without condition to the Trustees." This information was supplied to Lord Warwick by Mr. Archibald Flower on July 8.

52. It will be seen by the above that "the Trustees spoke of Carnegie's
offered as a gift." It must therefore be remembered that the Trustees began to destroy and pull down houses in Henley Street which had only been offered, and were not yet given.

53. Following on the statement made to Lord Warwick by Mr. Archibald D. Flower on July 8, the following paragraph appeared in the Stratford-on-Avon Herald of July 10:

"The Birthplace Trustees will doubtless feel much relief from the communication recently made to them that the threatened legal proceedings have been abandoned. Some busybodies, dissatisfied with their methods of administering the affairs of the Trust, imagined that the Trustees contemplated violating some of its legal obligations, and proceedings to arrest their mischievous proclivities were notified in the usual manner. The equanimity of these gentlemen was not greatly upset by the turn events had taken, and they simply left the matter in the hands of their solicitor and a small committee. We know not what has led to the abandonment of the proceedings, but the discovery has doubtless been made that the Trustees have quite as much reverence for the buildings entrusted to their care as meddling outsiders. With regard to the property Mr. Carnegie has presented, or intends presenting, to the Trust, he could impose what conditions he pleased, and the cottages which have been demolished were given for the express purpose of affording greater protection to the Birthplace. This was a condition that could not be ignored, and if the Trustees felt that they could not accept the property on the terms imposed, their only alternative was to decline it altogether. They have done, what every reasonable and sagacious body of men would do—accepted, with gratitude, Mr. Carnegie's gift, and will use it in the best interests of the Trust. No doubt the people who instituted these proceedings thought they were doing a very laudable act, but in this instance they doubtless found they were a little premature."

54. That the Trustees did "contemplate violating some of their Trust's legal obligations"—has been proved by—

Firstly: Their decision to destroy the custodian's cottage which was under protection of the Act of 1891.

Secondly: By their intention to demolish Shakespearean houses of which they hold the deeds in their charge at the Birthplace.

And it may be added that it is not legally usual to destroy property which has not yet been formally conveyed over to the destroyers.

55. The explanation to Lord Warwick was furnished on July 8; the explanation to the Stratford townspeople on July 10; and on the 11th or 12th Mr. Archibald Flower went to Skibo Castle to visit Mr. Andrew Carnegie concerning the matters in hand.

56. The reader must now bear in mind the statement given in the local paper of July 10: "Mr. Carnegie could impose what conditions he pleased." Mr. Flower states that the property is conveyed "absolutely without conditions." Therefore, as Mr. Cárnegie imposes no conditions, it is to be
inferred that after Mr. Edgar Flower’s meeting as held on the 15th of May, the cottages, formerly one house, belonging to Shakespeare’s granddaughter, will be still spared.

57. With regard to Birch’s shop, traditionally believed to be the house of Thomas Greene, Shakespeare’s cousin, the “identity” of this is already destroyed. The work of “adapting it to the uses of a Free Library” has begun, and it is a thousand pities that so genuinely interesting a relic of the true Shakespearean day should be merged into a Carnegie book-building, and lost to the Shakespearean students of the world. Personally I do not regret either the time, money, or trouble I have taken in endeavouring to save it from twentieth-century vandalism. I should have been ashamed of myself had I not put forth all my best energies in the work, and I am proud to have been the means of rescuing at least a part of the property intended for destruction, the more so, as that property is provably known to have belonged to Shakespeare’s own family. That it would have been utterly demolished had I not spoken out, is made manifest by the statements of the Trustees themselves.

58. But since Mr. Sidney Lee arrived in England from his recent tour in the United States, and since he paid visits to both Mr. Edgar Flower, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Birthplace Trust, and Mr. Archibald D. Flower, Chairman of the Carnegie Free Library Committee, he seems to have been very seriously misled by representations of a totally different character to the actual facts.

Firstly: He appears, from a letter to the press published in the Manchester Guardian on June 29, as well as in other journals, to be fully persuaded that No Demolition of Old Houses or Shakespearean property is, or ever was, intended.

This is manifestly untrue. The publicly reported intentions of the Trustees, leave no room for doubt as to their fixed resolve to destroy all the houses existing between the Technical School and the Birthplace, in order to have “a clear space without any houses.” (See Mr. Edgar Flower’s statement in Clause 12.)

Secondly: Mr. Sidney Lee states that “the Trustees were patiently taking the best advice” from the various archaeological experts who visited the site to examine the property.

Mr. Lee is apparently unaware that had I not brought the matter before Lord Avebury and the Selborne Society, the other archaeological societies would never have heard of the intended alterations in Henley Street, nor would any experts have been secured to offer “the best advice.” The only representative of any one of them, Mr. Cossins, a local correspondent of the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings, had omitted to give his Committee any information on the matter, and had moreover given his “best advice” as to the Entire Demolition of the house built in 1563 (Birch’s house), in order to “utilise the space for the erection of a Free Library.” (See Clause 14.)
Thirdly: Mr. Sidney Lee has apparently been told that "the circumstances of the case excluded from the Corporation's consideration an elaborate architectural design."

To prove the contrary, the reader has only to refer to the Frontispiece and Clause 7, where the Local Paper's Report of the intended Library is given.

Fourthly: Mr. Sidney Lee commits himself to the following singular statement: "The process of modernising Henley Street had in past years proceeded very far, and but for Mr. Carnegie's interposition threatened a conspicuous advance. (See Clause 36.) That process has now, at an interesting point in the thoroughfare, been arrested, and some careful and scholarly restoration has been made practicable."

Mr. Lee will no doubt be among the first to give justice where justice is due, and will perhaps in time realise that but for the interposition of one who is not a Carnegie, but merely a humble student and devout lover of Shakespeare, namely myself, the "conspicuous advance" of the "modernising of Henley Street," would have been obtrusively marked by the erection of a brick and timber building, as set forth in the Frontispiece, having a frontage of sixty-one feet. And that "the process has now, at an interesting point in the thoroughfare, been arrested," is certainly not due to Mr. Carnegie, but to the public controversy which I started, and which the London and Birmingham Press have supported with a generous and hearty unanimity for which all true lovers of Shakespeare, and the few remaining relics associated with him, should be sincerely grateful. Also, that "some careful and scholarly restoration has been made practicable" is also due to the fact that I was fortunate enough to awaken the interest of the learned Societies at a crucial moment, before every house was swept away "root and branch," and only "two rocks of stone" (to again quote Mr. Edgar Flower's own proposal) set to mark the boundary between Shakespeare's Birthplace, and the sixty-one-foot frontaged Free Library. "Facts are chiefs that winna ding," and I trust that this civil and uncontentious setting forth of all the circumstances known to myself in this discussion, may enable those who are, or who have been interested in the preservation of Shakespearean associations, to disentangle the subject from side-issues and misrepresentations, and to see it in a clear light, without prejudice. Personalities, and personal considerations are altogether outside a matter which from the first I have held to be of Public and National Interest. I do not think I am mistaken in believing that the smallest and most traditional scrap of Shakespearean times is dearer to the world than a wilderness of Free Libraries. And while I have never objected to Mr. Carnegie's gift set in its proper place, i.e. as suggested by Mr. Sidney Colvin, with the other group of modern buildings in Stratford-on-Avon, comprising the Memorial Theatre and Lecture-Room, and while I should have hesitated to make so strong a public protest had the proposed building been intended to occupy ONLY the small space of frontage next to the
Technical School, which, being left vacant by a fire, needed to be filled up, I have steadily maintained, and still maintain, that to destroy or alter genuine old houses of Shakespeare's time for the sake of erecting any modern thing whatever, is nothing less than a national scandal, and a grave discredit to all those wilfully concerned in it. That such destruction was fully intended, and that such alteration is now in progress, can be proved by the Plain Truth of all the circumstances.

NOTE.

Inasmuch as the Shakespeare's Birthplace Trust, incorporated under Act of Parliament, 1891, is a Public Trust, and not a Private Concern, it is perhaps not unreasonable that the Public, who are interested in the Preservation of Shakespearean Associations, should ask that the full and explicit terms of the Deed, by which Mr. Carnegie conveys the two Cottages (formerly one House and the property of the Shakespeare family) over to the Trustees, "without conditions," shall be given to the Press for the satisfaction of the Public.
THE BIRTHPLACE TRUSTEES.

LIFE-TRUSTEES.

EDGAR FLOWER. Chairman of the Executive Committee.
ARCHIBALD D. FLOWER. Chairman of the Free Library Committee.
SIDNEY LEE. Elected this year, 1903.
The Earl of Warwick. Elected this year, 1903.
ARTHUR EDWARD BAKER. (A nephew of the late Halliwell Phillips.)
The Rev. Canon Evans, M.A.
The Lord Ronald Gower.
Frederick Haynes, F.S.A.
Sir Henry Irving.
Sir Theodore Martin.

Of the above it will be noticed that two of the most distinguished and prominent men, namely, Lord Warwick and Mr. Sidney Lee, have only been this year elected. Mr. Sidney Lee is a personal friend of both Mr. Edgar Flower and Mr. Archibald D. Flower. With regard to Lord Warwick, his earnest, courteous and reasonable representations with regard to the alterations in Henley Street have been almost, if not entirely, ignored. Of the remaining Trustees, Frederick Haynes, F.S.A., is incapable, through age and infirmity, of transacting any business; Sir Henry Irving never attends a meeting of Trustees, and I understand the same fact applies to Lord Ronald Gower and Sir Theodore Martin. The Rev. Canon Evans, M.A., resides at Bournemouth, and does not often, so I am told, visit Stratford; and Mr. Arthur Edward Baker is equally an unfrequent visitor. The business therefore of the Executive, as far as the Life-Trustees are concerned, may presumably be said to rest with Mr. Edgar Flower and Mr. Archibald D. Flower.

TRUSTEES IN EX-OFFICIO.

LORD LEIGH, the Lord Lieutenant of the County.
The MAYOR OF STRATFORD (at present G. M. Bird).
The Rev. George Arbuthnot, M.A. (Vicar of the Parish).
Robert Lunn, Town Clerk of the Borough.

After these come the Aldermen and Justices of the Peace for the Borough, as follows:—

A. E. Park. R. Hawkes.
W. Pearce. W. Hutchings.
R. M. Bird.
These form a nucleus of the town's trade and business men, and are mentioned in the article included in this Appendix, i.e. "The Body-Snatchers," together with what I venture to consider the most truly astonishing "Record Committee" in the world, taking into account the fact that it is entitled to deal with all the valuable documents relating to the town of Shakespeare's birth.

RECORD COMMITTEE.

E. J. Beckwith, M.A., Master of Trinity College.
Archibald D. Flower.
W. G. Colbourne.
G. M. Bird.

R. Hawkes.
G. F. Kendall.
W. T. Jordan.
A. Tyler.
REPORT

FURNISHED TO THE BRITISH ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

BY

GEORGE PATRICK, A.R.I.B.A., Hon. Sec.,

To the Chairman and Members of the Council of the British Archaeological Association.

"Gentlemen,

"Re ALTERATIONS, HENLEY STREET, STRATFORD-ON-AVON.

"I have to report that in accordance with your instructions, I have visited Stratford-on-Avon in company with Mr. Allen S. Walker. Mr. Philips, who represented the Selborne Society, also accompanied us. Mr. Flower sent his carriage to meet us at the railway station, and himself pointed out to us what was proposed to be done to the houses. I made, as directed, a very careful examination of the buildings, and now beg to state the result of my Survey.

"1. The house known as Birch's Shop, or the "Crock Shop," and stated to have been the house of Shakespeare's cousin, and later that of Collins, the lawyer who drew up Shakespeare's will, and to date from 1563, contains in the upper storey, some ancient framing and panelling in fairly sound condition and of interesting character. By the recent pulling down of the two cottages, the side of this house is now exposed, and is in a very dilapidated condition, requiring very careful reparation, and that without further delay. Some of the timbers are quite decayed, and others show the action of fire at some period. This house appears to have had, originally, an overhanging front, as the recent demolition alluded to has exposed the angle storey post and curved bracket of massive timber. Careful reparation of this side with old sound timber, of which, I am informed, there is plenty available from other demolished houses in the town, and the filling in of the interspaces with good 'rough-cast,' is what I would venture to recommend for its preservation, together with careful pointing of the exposed brickwork. So far as is perceptible at present, no other portion of the old timber front remains behind the red brick wall. I fear the proposed alterations to the interior of this house, for the purpose of utilising it as a portion of the new 'Carnegie Library,' would seriously impair the stability of the structure, besides destroying its identity as the house occupied by a relative of Shakespeare.

"2. I think it would be a mistake to remove the red brick front or to carry out the proposed alterations, as the house does not appear to me to be suitable to the purposes of a library; moreover, there is ample space in the rear available for the Library buildings, which can be approached
from the main street (Henley Street), without interfering in any way with this house. Carefully repaired, as above suggested, the house will last for many years, and will be available for other public purposes.

"3. The other two houses, next the garden of Shakespeare's Birthplace, possess much that is of interest, and contain a considerable portion of the original timberwork quite sound. The roof in particular, with massive principals, tie-beams, and curved braces, is continuous over both houses, and was, I think, at one time open to the floor beneath, the present upper storey ceiling being a later introduction. These houses—I am informed—were purchased by the husband of Shakespeare's granddaughter. As they stand at present, they can easily be repaired to last for years to come; and I should think could be made very useful for parish or other public purposes with the minimum of alteration of existing arrangements.

"4. In conclusion, I am bound to admit the difficulty of the position in which the Corporation of Stratford-on-Avon, the Birthplace Trustees, and the Library Committee are placed. I also believe they honestly desire not wilfully to destroy any evidence, however small, which connects their ancient town with the person or the family of the wonderful genius whose birth and residence there have made that town so illustrious. I feel sure that, if they can see their way to allow these modest buildings to remain, carrying out only such works of reparation as are necessary, and using them in some such way as I have suggested, they will avoid giving pain to those residents and visitors who appreciate so highly the historical, literary, and sentimental associations in any way connected with Shakespeare, and will deserve of, and surely will receive from, them appreciative gratitude.—I am, Gentlemen, yours faithfully,


"June 24th, 1908."

1 The offer of £1000 made to the Trustees would have included the handing over this house to their care, "repaired" as suggested.—Marie Corelli.
PROPOSITION

FOR THE PRESERVATION OF THE OLD-WORLD CHARACTER
OF STRATFORD-ON-AVON

BY

THACKERAY TURNER.

As Submitted to and approved by the Committee of the Society for the
Preservation of Ancient Buildings.

[As far back as 1900, I took an opportunity to lay before Mr. Thackeray
Turner the facts of the growing spoliation of Stratford-on-Avon, and the rapid
destruction of its old-world character. I suggested to him the formation of a
Society of Shakespearean lovers and students who should make it their chief
duty to guard from vandalism the town of the Poet's birth and death. Mr.
Thackeray Turner received the idea with considerable enthusiasm, and on the
4th of January 1901 wrote me the subjoined letter, containing the propositions
set forth]:—

THE SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF ANCIENT
BUILDINGS.

10 BUCKINGHAM STREET, ADELPHI, W.C.

"DEAR MADAM,—I enclose herewith the notes which I drafted in accordance
with your request. I read them to my Committee yesterday, and it directed me
to say that it approves of what I have written. The general opinion of the
meeting was that if you were successful, as it sincerely hopes you will be, in
starting a Society in Stratford-on-Avon, it might be wise to allow it to take the
form of the Society which has been formed at Guildford, called the ‘Old Guild-
ford Society.’ It has objects similar to yours, but embraces all questions
affecting the amenities of the Town and neighbourhood. It is affiliated with our
Society, the National Trust, and the Commons and Footpaths Preservation Society.

"If I can assist you further I shall be most happy to do so.

"With regard to your remarks about the Guild Chapel, it is perhaps well
that I should tell you that we have been in correspondence with the Rev. Dr.
Dalton, whom you may know.—I remain, dear Madam, yours faithfully,

"THACKERAY TURNER, Secretary.

"4th January 1901."

PROPOSITIONS.

"1. To retain the historical aspect of Shakespeare's native Town as far as
possible by protecting the buildings which remain, from the hand of time AND
THE DESTRUCTION OF MAN.
"2. With the view of attaining this object, to urge the custodians to keep the buildings in constant repair, and to oppose all additions which cannot come under the head of repair.

"3. To watch all proposals for new buildings, and urge that when they are erected they shall be built of suitable local materials, and be kept simple and quiet in design.

"4. To lay these objects before the Authorities on every occasion, and failing their attention, to bring the matter before the public and urge the Government to give its assistance."

Mr. Thackeray Turner will, I think, be the first to own that I have carried out his suggestions faithfully, and to the letter.

Marie Corelli.
THE BODY-SNATCHERS:

AN APPEAL.

*This article is here reprinted from the Magazine "King and Country." It appeared in the April number, 1903.*

Many strange and gruesome stories have of late been afloat concerning the digging up of dead bodies for dissection in surgical laboratories. With bated breath, as it were, the newspapers tell us, in a Thrilling-whisper-paragraph, of men bent on the pursuit of science, who go, like ghouls in the silence of the night, to drag up corpses which have been consigned by bell, book, and candle to "eternal rest," with prayers, tears, and blessings, and who bear them away secretly to their dissecting-tables, there to be severed, artery from artery, limb from limb, till only the ghastly fragments of what was once man or woman, lie on their butchers' chopping-board of trade. We have been told how these "scientists" actually steal the dead for common use as targets—how they will take the poor lifeless forms of human beings who once loved and thought and suffered, and set them up as "marks" to be shot at, in the bloody and brutal "scientific" pastime which they carry on in their private dissecting-hells. If a bullet pierces the dead heart—good! That counts one to the brave marksman! If it hits the spot where once the brain pulsedated—why, still better!—for such a shot must be deemed thoroughly effectual. Grim and horrible are these outrages of the living on the dead; and we sicken as we learn that such things can be done and are done in the "civilised" twentieth century of the Christian era. Nero, with all his bestialities and prodigalties of cruelty and vice, scarcely came up to such a refined point of devilish Materialism as to rob graves of their buried dead. But, after all, these crimes committed by the human monsters who favour corpse-dissection and vivisection are on bodies only; and we are told: "Fear not them which kill the body; rather fear them which kill the soul." When both are killed together, what shall be the remedy? In these latter days a tribe of persons has sprung up who combine in themselves the two criminal lusts of Body-snatching and Soul-killing—their main object being to obtain temporary notoriety by fair means or foul. Incapable themselves of doing anything intelligent or useful in the world, their sole instinct is to rob and kill, after the fashion of savages and cannibals. And if a Soul can be slain as well as a Body, the greater their triumph. The finer and nobler the individuality of the soul and body they fasten upon, the more they rejoice as they swell and gorge and fatten like carrion crows on their stolen meal. The larger the dead eagle, the more food for smaller birds of prey.

It has been ordained by the Almighty Creator of all things wise, beautiful, or wonderful, that for England, as for all the little world wherein we dwell, there shall only be one SHAKESPEARE. One supreme spirit of wisdom, truth, and loving human perception—almost infinite, indeed, in all these attri-
the body-snatchers

butes because so sturdily simple, so straightforward, and so clear, without any adornment of learned artifice or concealment of honest intention. No man before him was ever so greatly endowed or so truly inspired; no man after him has come, or ever will come, that shall be deemed worthy to have fastened his shoe-tie. This being the case, his remains furnish a whole larder of feasting for the tribe of body-snatchers and soul-killers. They swarm upon his memory like flies on a pot of honey. They metaphorically drag his ashes out of their quiet niche in the Trinity Church of Stratford-on-Avon and rub the sacred dust between their dirty fingers and thumbs. Assuming to be "literary" (though in the name of all the gods of Greece, literature in her highest sense surely repudiates such scribbling varlets as only fit to write Pill-posters), they seize scurrilous and libellous pens wherewith to produce "commentaries," "discussions," "examinations," and "Bacon theories" in frenzied attempts to hang their names on to the great fame they envy miserably, and would fain belittle. And I make bold to say that if England, and the English, as the fortunate possessors of Shakespeare's Birthplace, Deathplace, and Immortal Name, were once to take such prompt and decisive action to guard his memory, as they should do, such body-snatching, such soul-killing of the greatest, noblest Poet of the world would never be. If English literary men thought less of themselves, and more of the honour of their greatest master and leader, whose brains every scribbler, great and small, has sucked at for over three hundred years, they would never find space in any magazine or newspaper for so much as a comment on the idiotic "Bacon theory" first propounded by that poor crank, Ignatius Donnelly, who published his fantastic "Cryptogram" before he had so much as visited Stratford or seen anything of the records there. Nor, I will add, would they permit such remains of Shakespeare as do exist in his native town, to be neglected, mismanaged, or utterly destroyed by well-meaning persons who are, nevertheless, wholly ignorant of the value to the world at large, of every smallest, most minute connection with the acknowledged head and front of English literature.

I speak boldly, for there is need to speak. If someone had spoken in 1756, when a "Christian" clergyman, the Rev. Francis Gastrell, cut down Shakespeare's favourite mulberry-tree and rased the house wherein he died, New Place, to the ground, both house and tree might have been still standing. Cowardice in conduct, whether social, political or literary, is the hallmark of the hypocrite and time-server, and to such a character I have no claim. When a man summons up sufficient courage to protest against an abuse or an outrage, his utterance is termed "virile." When a woman does the same thing, she is accused of "screaming." But "virility" (if it existed anywhere at the time of the discussion) did nothing to prevent the effigy of the late Lady Martin (Helen Faucit) from being stuck up opposite the bust of Shakespeare in Trinity Church Chancel. "Virility" showed itself on that particular occasion in the spleen, egotism and overwhelming vanity of the men concerned in the proposed desecration. But my "scream," as it was then called by such "virile" personages as stood by and did nothing, at any rate saved those who sincerely reverence Shakespeare's memory from the bitter shame of having to look across the historic grave to an ill-designed alto-rilievo of a modern actress sitting by a modern reading lamp, backing the Communion-table, with the Poet's works kicking casually about her feet, and a medallion of the Immortal himself falling, as it seemed, out of the folds of her skirt and rolling under her chair! Whatever appalling noise that could possibly be emitted by man or woman to prevent such sacrilege was useful and welcome, whether "scream," or cry, or "virile" yell. Anything at so crucial a moment was better than the mischievous apathy
of silence. And apparently my "scream" was not quite loud enough, for since that day hundreds of people both in Great Britain and the United States have written to me asking me why I did not do "something to prevent such an eyesore as the Martin pulpit" from being erected in the church? Heartily do I wish I could have prevented it; and heartily do the worthy townspeople of Stratford regret that the thing was ever put up; but I was in the one case fortunately able to bring legal force to bear on the saving of the chancel; and I could not so place a bar against the intrusion of the ugly marble pulpit, for which a "faculty" had been easily granted by the retired Bishop of Worcester, Dr. Perowne. Dr. Perowne had, by the bye, equally granted his "faculty" for hacking about the chancel; only it so happened that for once that "faculty" proved useless. "But that is another story." While on this branch of the subject, however, it should, I think, be realised by those interested in the matter that the chancel holding Shakespeare's Grave is by no means safe from modern interference. Any new incumbent coming after the present vicar (the Rev. George Abuluthnot), and possessing a "crank"—let us say against Literature—whose Bishop is ready to favour his design, could "dig the dust encoosed here."

The only preventive would be the force of public opinion. But if no one happened to be near to give the warning note that should rouse public opinion, the world would remain in ignorance of the mischief being done. It is a matter of urgent need that the Church of the Holy Trinity in Stratford-on-Avon should be for ever protected from all possible local interference, by an Act of Parliament. It is not too much to ask that the most honoured literary Shrine in the world should be specially and particularly guarded, preserved, and freed from any debt, by the Government of that country which gave Shakespeare birth. Such an Act once passed would be invaluable to the whole world, and it might incorporate with its care of the church a Governmental protection of the whole of Henley Street, the Birthplace, Ann Hathaway's Cottage and New Place. There are, of course, many other nooks and corners intimately connected with Shakespearean history in the town and neighbourhood. But the church, the scene of Shakespeare's baptism; Henley Street, where he was born, and where his childish feet wandered up and down on his way to and from school; Shottery, where he courted and won his wife, Ann Hathaway; and New Place, where he breathed his last, are certainly the four chief landmarks of the passing of the British Apollo.

I strongly desire to arouse the attention of such true lovers of literature as honour and reverence the genius of Shakespeare, to the condition and state of things as they are in Stratford-on-Avon at the present day, when, much more than in time past, the ruthless hand of the moderniser and jerry-builder is allowed to play havoc with such old relics as can never be replaced, and whose value from their connection with Shakespeare history is quite incalculable. Many ancient and picturesque houses have lately been pulled down, to be replaced by the vulgarlest looking "villas," while the fine oak rafters and paneling contained in them have been sold out of the town. Even the little village of Shottery, dear to all artists, is being thoroughly "vandalised," if one may use such an expression, by the Marquis of Hertford 1 and his agents. Pretty thatched cottages are being mended with common slate, or, worse still, covered in with corrugated iron roofing; ugly, red-brick jerry-built shanties are springing up in every direction; noble trees are wantonly cut down; and one can

1 It is stated that the Marquis of Hertford has sold much of his property, and that the purchasers are responsible for recent vandalisms; but in selling, the Marquis might easily have imposed such conditions of sale as to render vandalism impossible
scarcely be too thankful that Ann Hathaway's cottage does not belong to the noble Marquis, or it might have been destroyed by this time, and a cheap "tea-room" erected in its place, so little interest does he appear to take personally in the preservation of this well-nigh unique fifteenth-century village of "old" England. It is quite easy to re-thatch the cottages—quite simple to mend their dilapidations with old-fashioned bricks and tiles rather than common slate—and it would be equally cheap to build such new houses for the people as should be in the old unobtrusive style, and so preserve the original simple and pastoral aspect of the village. Public attention should, however, be called to certain stupid, muddle-headed "by-laws" framed either by the Government or the County Council, which actually forbid the building of thatched cottages. Those who know anything about a thatched roof can testify to its warmth and weatherproof value, while in the way of beauty and picturesqueness it leaves nothing to be desired. I have just said that it is a matter for congratulation that Ann Hathaway's cottage is not under the control of the Marquis of Hertford; it is equally fortunate that the Dogberry and Vergetes of the "by-laws" cannot interfere with it, or its beautiful grey thatched roof would have been stripped off by now and cheap corrugated iron substituted. Certes, the authorities of the County Council, or whatever "body" it is that produces "by-laws," are genuinely ignorant of good taste. They are like Bottom the Weaver, who, when offered fairy entertainment, preferred "a peck of provender." With their numerous "obstructive" notions they are swiftly destroying the sylvan beauty of the English landscape by ordering the indiscriminate cutting down of trees. In Warwickshire this wanton work is attaining alarming proportions, for there will soon not be a single noble tree left between Stratford and the outlying districts. The Parliamentary member, Mr. P. S. Foster, whose love of trees and appreciation of beautiful scenery are well known in the neighbourhood, does his best to check the ever-growing evil, and denounces it in strong terms. He tells me that in a district with which he is familiar, Tamworth, the woodland scenery used, some years back, to be a glory to the eyes and heart, but that now not a single tree is left of any character, and that only bare, leafless stretches of land exist where there was once a perfect paradise of foliage. There are certain land-agents in the Stratford neighbourhood who take a fiendish pleasure in the work of devastation. They have the murderer's spirit; they love to gloat on the fallen corpses of the splendid old oaks and elms which they mark for death with their trader's brand. The sapient and oracular "by-laws" protect them in their wicked destruction of what can never be replaced, for these same "by-laws" have a kind of vague standing order that no tree or branch shall overhang the high road, thus practically dooming to death every stately avenue of rich foliage and every grateful bower of shade provided by intertwisting boughs of green in country lanes. It is surely time strong protest was made against this foolish disfigurement of the beautiful English landscape. In Shakespeare's country the ruin is particularly disastrous and heart-rending. No one seems to have the courage to speak, and when one or two persons do protest, the land-agents turn deaf ears to even the most reasonable representations. Many a distinguished painter, many a literary student has come to me in anguish about the destruction of Shakespeare's "leafy Warwickshire," and particularly about the spoliation of Shottery. "What is to be done? The place will be ruined. Can no appeal from literary England be made to the Marquis of Hertford?" one of our Canadian notabilities, over for the Coronation, asked me last year. That is just it. Literary England is required, like Commercial England, in the words of the Prince of Wales, to "wake up." Literary England is asked to save its most
valuable literary possession—the town and village connected with the life and death of its great master-mind, Shakespeare. And literary England (together with literary America, and all literary Europe, if they please) will do well to step forward just now and save Henley Street, the street where the Poet was born. Its simple and humble character is threatened—a Carnegie "Free Library" of "best design and new material" is to companion and dwarf the Birthplace, and the whole street will "smell to Heaven" of most unpoeic milions.

When I first went to reside in Stratford in 1900 there was, at the corner of Henley Street, a quaint oak-raftered house of Shakespeare's time. I was invited to see the place "before it was pulled down." I found it to be wonderfully quaint and pretty, full of very valuable old timber; and I did my best to persuade the owner to keep it standing. I would have purchased it willingly had he offered to sell it, just to save it for the town. It is now entirely destroyed, and a hideous erection in the style of a red-brick West Kensington shop occupies its place, an absolute affront to the eye and an offence to the mind.

A little farther up on the same side (not on the side of Shakespeare's Birthplace) are certain "stores," equally glaring in design, which should never have been allowed to occupy that position; and nearly opposite this again (this time on the side of the Birthplace) is the Technical School, to which it is proposed to add the Carnegie Library.¹ The Technical School is an exceedingly ugly building, admitted to be so by those who put it up—of the modern half-timbered "villa" type—such as one frequently sees on Clapham Common. The Library is to be built at the same elevation, and the whole block will, if the intervening old houses are cleared away as proposed and intended, proudly overshadow Shakespeare's Birthplace as a sign-manual of what the over-officiousness of moneyed men can do to dwarf the abode of genius. It has been asserted publicly that the houses proposed for demolition and destruction are "not ancient." The correct data of one of them at any rate,² according to the old leases extant, are as follows: In 1563, a year before Shakespeare's birth, the dwelling was occupied by one Gilbert Bradley, glover; in 1577 it passed to one William Wilson, and part of it being damaged by fire, this individual got a "renewal of lease" on easier terms to enable him to rebuild on December 16, 1595. On August 17, 1610, six years before Shakespeare's death, it passed to a Thomas Greene, of Bishopsoton, yeoman, and it has been imagined that this Thomas Greene may have been Shakespeare's own cousin, who was also a Thomas Greene. In 1615 and 1618, the same Thomas Greene, with Elizabeth his wife, renewed the lease of the house, and on July 6, 1632, we find it in the possession of "Thomas Greene the elder, gent." The place has, therefore, sufficient history to warrant its preservation, and the other cottages beside it, though comparatively modern, are nevertheless of the old-world, unobtrusive type. There is not the slightest danger of "fire to the Birthplace," as has been absurdly suggested, emanating from these humble little homes, which are far enough away from the historic house entirely to remove any need of such alarm. The chief point of the matter turns on association; and Lady Colin Campbell, in an admirable letter to the Birmingham Daily Post, puts the case in a nutshell: "There is only one Henley Street," she says, "and there is not room in Henley Street for both Shakespeare and Carnegie. Which is to wipe out the other?"

Since the foregoing, dates on one old house at least have been incontestably proved, the Messrs. Flower, the rich brewers, who are responsible for having, in

¹ This was written when the first design of the Free Library was intended for erection (see Frontispiece).
² I am indebted for these dates to Mr. Richard Savage, Librarian at the Birthplace.
the first place, begged a Free Library from Mr. Carnegie, have come to the conclusion that perhaps this one building had better be “restored” and “added to” (which, of course, means more or less modernising it) in order to make it serve (with modern additions) as the Free Library. It may be here mentioned that an “expert” was called in to pronounce on the state of the timber in this ancient building—a Mr. Cossins, who is not, by the way, an expert in timber, but in stone! The idea, however, of “modernising” the old house, adding new stuff on, and then turning it into Carnegie’s Free Library, does not in the least fulfil or satisfy the nature of the demand made by the lovers of literature, which is that Mr. Carnegie’s “munificence” shall not be connected with the name or premises of simple Henley Street in any way whatsoever. There is not room in such a street for more than one prominent name, and that name is Shakespeare. Mr. Carnegie is a generous, and an altogether excellent man, no doubt, but there is a wide abyss between Wealth and Genius. The one is perishable, the other is immortal.

All the mischief and meddling comes from the passion for Body-snatching and Soul-killing which attacks small and undistinguished persons. Any lie will serve them in their ghoulish work of rendering asunder a noble and gifted life piecemeal, and exposing the morsels to the public gaze, labelled side by side with their own paltry names. When they cannot do it in books written to deny the genius of the man they envy and vilify, they try it on in assertive buildings, which in the way of “beneficence” they stamp with the great name and their own together, linking the two in the same laurel-wreathed scroll. Buildings serve a double purpose, because they provide building contracts as well as public advertisement, and the contractor can but approve of such vandalism as puts money in his pocket. Literary England flaunts the name of her Shakespeare in the face of all other nations, who, to their credit be it said, bow to the Master’s sign. Let us see, now, how literary England has herself defended her greatest literary possession.

Up to the year 1847, Shakespeare’s Birthplace had been more or less uncared for, much of it being allowed to go to decay for want of anyone to take an interest in its preservation. Finally it was announced for sale by auction, and at the sudden and startling news all the world stood as it were on tiptoe to see what literary England would do. Literary England was not at all sure of herself, and noting her grandmotherly hesitation young America sent up an eagle “scream” : “If you do not value your most priceless possession,” she cried, across the roaring waters of the Atlantic, “I will take it from you ! I will step over and seize the Poet’s Birthplace, and tuck it under my strong young arm ! I will divide it bit by bit with tenderer care than one may remove crown diamonds from their setting, and I will build the treasure of the Old World up again in the New!”

But stay! This is pure “romancing.” It was not America at all; it was merely Barnum, who saw a good “spec” in Shakespeare’s Birthplace, and had, so report hath it, already began to “mark with chalk” the timbers for removal !

Anyhow, Grandmother England, violently shaken out of a doze by her wide-awake offspring, took off her spectacles, got up from her easy-chair, and between two yawns, secured the threatened shrine. Moreover, while the fit of wakefulness was still upon her, she issued (though not before 1891) a somewhat feeble Parliamentary “Act to incorporate the Trustees and Guardians of Shakespeare’s Birthplace, and to vest in them certain lands and other property in Stratford-on-Avon, including the property known as Shakespeare’s Birthplace.” Which Act (54 Vict. chap. 3) can be seen by anyone having a mind to read the same.
These Trustees and Guardians of Shakespeare's Birthplace are named as "The Mayor, Aldermen, and Burgesses of Stratford-on-Avon"; and at this present day they are all excellent, well-meaning, and worthy men, but none of them even profess to be deeply skilled and instructed in matters literary or artistic, and none of them have been as yet quite as vitally convinced, as they may perhaps soon be, of the value of Shakespeare history to their town, or of the pricelessness of his work to the world. They stand in the year 1903 as follow: In ex-officio they are: The Lord-Lieutenant of the county, Lord Leigh; the Mayor of the borough, at present Mr. G. M. Bird; and the Aldermen and Justices of the Peace for the borough, as follow:—W. G. Colbourne, proprietor of the Red Horse Hotel; R. Latimer Green, doctor; A. E. Park, brewer; W. Pearce, jeweller and silversmith; J. Smallwood, retired builder; R. M. Bird, father of the present Mayor; G. Boydlen, editor of the local paper; J. Cox, timber merchant; R. Hawkes, chemist; W. Hutchings, auctioneer and estate agent; J. Nason, doctor.

Then come the Town Clerk of the borough, Robert Lunn; the Vicar of the parish, the Rev. George Arbuthnot, M.A., and the headmaster of the Grammar School, the Rev. Cornwell Robertson, M.A., who only has occupied his position a year, and who was called upon to attend the annual meeting and act as an official when he had been in the town only a few days.

Out of all these mentioned, the only three who may presumably claim to have received a thorough literary and classical education are the Lord Leigh, a very venerable and kindly gentleman, who is scarcely ever seen in Stratford, and who does not make it at all a point of duty to attend the meetings concerning the Birthplace, the Rev. G. Arbuthnot, and the Rev. Cornwell Robertson.

Let us now proceed to those Trustees and Guardians of the Birthplace who are elected "for life." They are: Arthur Edward Baker, a nephew of the late Halliwell Phillips (this gentleman, so far as I can understand, seldom takes any part in any discussion concerning his great trust); the Rev. Canon Evans, M.A. (who lives near Bournemouth and seldom troubles himself about Stratford); Edgar Flower, brewer; and Archibald Dennis Flower, his son, likewise brewer (both of whom may be plainly said to "manage" the whole thing); the Lord Ronald Gower (this gentleman's voice is never heard concerning any matters which regard the preservation of Shakespeare's relics); Frederick Haynes, F.S.A., whose weight of years renders it impossible for him to give any active attention to the matters in hand; Sir Henry Irving, who though he promised more than ten years ago to visit Stratford and take some active interest in his master's native town, has never done so; Sir Theodore Martin, who lately distinguished himself by squabbling with the vicar over the erection of the terrible pulpit which now disfigures the church; and Mr. Sidney Lee, who has only just been elected, and has, I presume, never had the time to go thoroughly into the matters demanding his closest and most scholarly attention, for what he has as yet published concerning Stratford merely "darkeneth knowledge by vain counsel."

Now let us consider what is called the "Record Committee," a body which has in its power to deal with the most valuable documents, papers, deeds, and manuscripts relating to the town, and to those parts of it, and to those people dwelling in it, who were, or who might have been, connected with the Shakespearean epoch. They are as follow:—W. G. Colbourne, proprietor of the Red Horse Hotel; G. M. Bird, the present mayor; R. Hawkes, chemist; G. F.

1 Since this was written I am glad to say that the Earl of Warwick has been elected a Trustee. His advice, however, re Henley Street, has been disregarded by the Executive.
Kendall, chemist; W. T. Jordan, farmer; A. Tyler, photographer. To these must be added E. J. Beckwith, the Master of Trinity College; and A. D. Flower (the late mayor, now deputy-mayor), the wealthy brewer before-mentioned. The two latter gentlemen are the only persons on what is perhaps the most valuable Record Committee in the world, who can claim what may be termed a "Varsity" training.

I give these facts entirely without comment. They are for literary England and literary Europe and America to consider. No doubt both the Trustees and Guardians, and the gentlemen of the Record Committee, are the worthiest men that could possibly be found in the town to undertake the particularly literary and scholarly duties assigned to them. The question stands thus: Is literary England satisfied that her most priceless literary possession shall be thus guarded? I merely put the question, and on my own account offer no answer.

For it has to be conceded that most of Shakespeare's townsmen above-named try faithfully to do their faithful best in the discharge of their high and peculiar duty, lacking, as they do entirely, any support, instruction, financial help or guidance, such as should be most certainly extended towards their efforts by literary England, literary America, and the whole of the civilised literary world. If they make mistakes it is not by any means their fault—it is their misfortune. There are hundreds of literary men who should, were they loyal to their art, interest themselves in the preservation of all the relics remaining of their great monarch, and in the sturdy defence of his name and memory; and far from resenting such interest, all those Stratford men and women who are honestly concerned in the welfare—financial as well as artistic—of their unique town, would meet them half-way, knowing, as they must know, that the more closely the neighbourhood preserves its old-world and special character the greater and more steadily lasting must be its power and prosperity from even a "base commercial" point of view.

It is stated in the Parliamentary Act, passed in 1891, that the Trustees "shall purchase," among other things, "the house at Wilmcote, known as the house of Mary Arden, and any other property known or believed to have belonged to William Shakespeare, or his wife, or parents, or relations."

That this injunction has not been carried out I know, for Mary Arden's Cottage was for sale in 1899, and I myself went to see it with a view to purchasing it, and consigning the same to the care of Stratford and the Nation. But before I could so much as make an offer, it had gone to utter spoliation. Scraped and stuccoed, with all the beautiful old jessamine cut down and torn off the walls, someone, I know not who, has transformed the former home of Shakespeare's mother into two cheap "tenements," instead of allowing it to remain as it was, the one quaint old cottage which, when I saw it first, looked almost as idyllic as the house of Ann Hathaway.¹

¹ Every credit is due to the large benevolence of the late Mr. Charles Flower, who brought about the building of the Memorial Theatre on the banks of the Avon, even though his zeal carried him to the rash length of actually publishing a Bowdlerised issue of Shakespeare's works, concerning which it is said "the editor aimed especially at producing an edition which could be read aloud in general society!" O mirabile dictu! Here was a case of a well-meaning gentleman rushing in where angels fear to tread; but, all the same, no one can deny that had it not been for the enthusiasm, ardour, and ungrudging liberality of this excellent man, there would very probably have been no

¹ This statement has since been denied by the owner of the house, a Mr. Smith. I have been to see it again, and find my view entirely confirmed by the aspect of the house itself.
"Memorial" to Shakespeare at all in Strathears at the present day. Of course it is open to question whether the Memorial Theatre is a real benefit to the town, seeing that it is vacant for more than half the year, owing to the large fees asked for its use, though it is the only self-endowed theatre in Britain! Considering that so large a building, furnished and heated throughout, is devoted for ten out of every twelve months to merely providing a comfortable sitting-place for one or two custodians, it really seems a waste of money and good material on Mr. Carnegie's part even to build a Free Library at all anywhere else in the town, seeing that there is plenty of accommodation for such an institution in the Memorial itself. Considerable sums of money were subscribed by the outside public to this building, and though Mr. Charles Flower did most indubitably supply the necessary remaining and largest outlay required for its completion, he would have been the last person in the world to wish to make of it a kind of "white elephant," as it is now in the management of which the actual people of Shakespeare's town have no voice. Hence certain sarcastic names applied to it by the wicked wits of the neighbourhood, who are not wanting in the same native humour which impelled Shakespeare, so they say, to jest with the dignity of Sir Thomas Lucy in his character of Justice Shallow. But, as a matter of fact, some half-dozen letters which I happen to possess from the originator of the building, Charles Flower, letters written in 1890-91, amply testify to his intention that the Theatre should be anything but, as it is sometimes called, a "tied house"—that it should be of use and service to the Stratford townspeople—and that the pretty garden attached to it should be always open and "free." It is now kept locked, and persons can only gain admission to it by passing through the Theatre and paying a fee, which, though exceedingly small, still imposes a check on the former sweet liberty of a stroll by the quiet Avon which used to exist in good Charles Flower's lifetime. It seems only natural and reasonable that a building, lying waste as it were for nearly all the year, should be used for a Free Library as well as a theatre. No fittings are required—there is already a reading-room—a few extra shelves of books, some arm-chairs, side-tables and newspaper files, are all that is needed, and these appurtenances the Free Library rate would very soon cover. Even the smaller building, known as the Memorial Lecture Room, would make a fairly good Free Library all ready to hand. It is now very seldom used, and all its requirements would be tables, chairs, newspaper files, and an array of shelves well loaded with the necessary books. Or if both these buildings—the Memorial Theatre and the Memorial Lecture Room—are judged unsuitable for the purpose, there is a large piece of vacant land nearly opposite the Theatre, standing high and dry, with a pleasant frontage to the river, belonging to Mrs. Flower, widow of the late benevolent Charles Flower, which would make an excellent site for Mr. Carnegie's proposed gift, and which no doubt Mrs. Charles Flower would be only too generously ready to give if she were approached on the subject. At anyrate, it will thus be seen by the public at large that there exists not the slightest excuse for the disturbance or spoliation of Henley Street, where the Poet was born. If a Free Library be judged necessary for Stratford-on-Avon, though there are different opinions on that point, then, by all means, let there be a Free Library; but in the name of everything that is great and noble in literature, let there be no "snatching at" and millionaire-ising of the few priceless remains left to us of memory and association with the greatest man of all time.

The prevailing blight of a disastrous ignorance clouds the perception of many would-be examiners into the Shakespearean records; and even as regards the very
houses of the town the present inhabitants of them are perhaps the least conscious of their former history. The hard-working and patient librarian at the Birthplace, Mr. Richard Savage (whose unwearying industry has opened out a mine of Shakespearean wealth so vast that it would need many experts acting entirely under his guidance to follow out the rich veins of knowledge and information which he could put them all to work upon), is tied too fast to his desk of daily duty even to have the time to explain how very much there is yet to be done by scholars and students who would conscientiously devote themselves to the task of tracing the Shakespeare history, and establishing the proofs of Shakespeare's constant out-put of work in that three-hundred-years-ago period. He is only one man, expected to do the work of fifty. He sits, as it were, in the centre of a great web of time, whose filaments float to all points of the compass. His untiring researches enable him to give accurate accounts of almost every old building existing in or near Stratford. Quite lately an old house in the High Street has been uncovered and restored as far as possible to its ancient beauty, and Mr. Savage, diving into his records, finds the history of this house authentically carrying it back to the earliest days of Edward IV. Indeed, all the records of Stratford-on-Avon teen with proofs of its importance and position as a Guild of advanced education and learning in very ancient days. As early as 1402 there was a free school in the town, and at least three valuable monastic libraries. The deplorable ignorance of some writers, such as is shown by the author of a recent book, entitled The Problem of the Shakespeare Plays, who describes Stratford in the early days as a "filthy, benighted village," is scarcely to be excused or condoned, seeing that every proof to the contrary is on record and ready to hand for examination. The "Bacon theory," in the face of these proofs, is the most nonsensical fallacy ever trumped up for the gossip of nations, and it is a fact worth remembering that most of the discussions concerning it have been carried on by lawyers, whose "special pleading" would strive to prove the innocent guilty, and the guilty innocent, if the fees offered were large enough. It is quite easy to understand their attitude in the matter, for Francis Bacon, Lord Verulam, stands at the top of the legal profession as its leading intellectual rascal. It would be a great feather in the legal cap if he could somehow be washed clean of his bribery and corruption in the blood of an honest man. Attaining to the great position of Lord Chancellor of England, he disgraced that lofty post by conduct which was all the less excusable because of his high intellectual ability, and he stood, as he himself declared, "without fig-leaves," a nude and contemptible knave. Here are the words he wrote of himself in that stripped condition: "It resteth, therefore, that without fig-leaves, I do ingenuously confess and acknowledge that having understood the particulars of the charge, not formally from the House, but enough to inform my conscience and memory, I find sufficient and full, both to move me to desert the defence, and to move your Lordships to condemn and censure me."

It will be urged, of course, by all loyal Britons that the "Bacon theory," which vilifies and blackens the reputation of Shakespeare, was started in America. True. A good many unworthy things are started in America. America has its bad as well as its good—its mad people as well as its sane; but it scarcely behoves Shakespeare's countrymen to pay special attention to the bad and mad side of their Transatlantic cousins. Much talk do Americans make of their love for Shakespeare; yet they are the very people who have flung calumny on his name. Their conduct in this matter has by no means evoked any special respect or affection for them in Stratford-on-Avon. Certes, they have given a window to the Trinity Church, a very ugly one, too, of which the
whole cost is only £490, and which is not yet paid for, though it was "unveiled" with all due solemnity by Mr. Bayard, the then American Ambassador, so far back as 1896. All these years the "American admirers" of Shakespeare have been busy paying off that window, they are so ghastly poor! The sum of £110 yet remains on it; and so, as the vicar pathetically says, "it seems that the window will not be free from debt for several years yet." Hail Columbia! One must have patience with the poor little pauper who loves the memory of Shakespeare so much! Then there is a debt on the church itself, amounting to £312,1 which no "millionaire"—English, South African, or American—offers to pay, probably because it is not likely the vicar would put a stone in the wall saying that So-and-so had "generously" paid it. It would have to be quite a private affair, a sort of "let not thy right hand know what thy left hand doeth"—not a bold, brand-new Free Library. That is why it is not done.

Talking of America, a wondrous Mr. Child, of Philadelphia, "generously" put up a fountain in Stratford-on-Avon some years ago, of the ugliest possible squat design and make. It looks as if it had been hewn out in a fit of dull abstraction by a man of the Stone period. With that fountain in its eye—with that window in its church, Stratford-on-Avon hopes—respectfully and earnestly hopes—that America will give it no more positively ugly things in honour of Shakespeare. There are just now certain dark rumours afloat that America intends to "build" something in Stratford to testify to its love for the great Immortal, and two wandering females from ocean's other side have been seen "taking notes." Now Heaven forfend that any more American gifts of "new design and best material" cumber the poor, quaint little streets! though assuredly America could do much if she liked to beautify the town. She could, for instance, purchase and pull down the frightful modern excrecence known as "Lloyd's Bank," and put up in its place an exact and careful reproduction of the "Globe Theatre, Blackfriars," with a "fair garden" attached. Such a building could be used when the Memorial Theatre was set aside for the special warming of the feet of the custodians, and plays could be given in it by skilled and powerful actors, without scenery, as in Shakespeare's own time. I would do this if I were America; moreover, I would pay for my own window in the church; and till I had done these things I would not talk so much about the "immortal memory" of a man to whom I owed money.

But, to sum up everything, it is to the Imperial Government of Great Britain that an appeal should be made to guard and save Stratford-on-Avon from unnecessary destruction and spoliation. The land, the trees, the streets, the old houses, are sacred to the greatest name in all literature. Certain things cannot be done even by the "Mayor, Aldermen, and Burgesses" without Government support. Take, for example, a very mundane and commonplace fact—that the town is threatened by an electric light and power company. Electric light is not wanted in Stratford-on-Avon; it will double the rates for lighting the town to begin with, yet it seems that it can be forced on the people through Parliament. It need not be used; but it can be "brought in." To "bring it in" means the digging-up and hacking about of the old streets and historical landmarks. Venice—the beautiful, the glorious "city of the sea"—is fast crumbling under the interfering hand of the moderniser, who is indeed chiefly to blame for the fall of the Campanile and for the danger now threatening the Doges' Palace and Library. Is Shakespeare's quiet, dreamy, poetic little town to be equally mauled about in order to light it up with a garish glare suitable only to a modern railway station or Yankee restaurant bar, while its townsfolk are deliberately forced into double

1 This debt is now paid off.
the expense needed for the lighting of the town? If this be so, England is not a “free” country. It is a mere ground for exploiting “companies.”

There is, as has already been said, only one Shakespeare—there is only one Stratford-on-Avon—and it is not unreasonable, not unpatriotic, to ask the assistance of all the lovers of literature in the world to join in one strong body of earnest appeal to the British Government to keep the spot sacred, and hand it down as intact as may be to succeeding generations, who will be grateful to them for the gift. Nothing more and nothing less is required than an Act of Parliament to save the old streets and buildings from modern vandalism and destruction. An Act, moreover, which shall not leave everything of historic value solely in the hands of trustees or guardians who may be in any way unfitted for the work, or who might possibly take their duties too lightly. A protective Act it must be—not like the Bill which, apparently, has the authority of Parliament for the destruction of the long-cherished beauties of the Thames. For, says the current press:—

"The water companies have, it is contended, been allowed too great freedom in the disfiguration of the riverside by the erection of water walls, pumping-stations, coal-wharves, and chimneys, with utilitarian disregard for the ruin thus wrought to the natural beauties of the banks.

"Fine trees have been ruthlessly hewn down and lawns and meadows devastated with saddening effect in the operations of commercial vandalism.

"Notably between Kingston and Sunbury, beauty has been driven from the scene by grim, unlovely erections that are a blot upon the landscape.

"While this spoliation was being perpetrated, the Thames Conservancy Board do not appear to have reprostroned in the least with the vandals, who plead in justification that they had Parliamentary powers."

Here, it seems, there has been that lack of remonstrance which comes from selfish apathy and disinclination to take trouble; but in the case of Stratford-on-Avon remonstrance is offered, and protest is made on all sides. If the members of the literary profession in Great Britain will but unite in force to obtain necessary and absolute protection for all the priceless associations and records connected with Shakespeare and his time, they will perform a much required and noble service towards their brethren of the future. As a very clever and far-sighted American said the other day to the custodian of the Birthplace: "Everybody interested in a good cause should fight for the strict preservation of Stratford-on-Avon. We in America can build you up a city in no time, with all the modern improvements; we can give you electric light, electric cars and telephones, and 'rush' and worry you through your life at express speed; but we can't give you an old-world town like this, full of nooks and corners that teem with history, romance, and poetry; we can't give you the beautiful peaceful outlines of ancient gabled houses silvered by the moonlight, and old by-ways that look just as if one might meet Shakespeare himself round the corner. All I can say, after seeing this place, is: Take care of it! Keep it as a treasure of the world, for which the world as it grows wiser and saner will be grateful as long as it lasts."

And it is high time to take care of it; time that the Body-snatchers should be arrested in their many acts of sacrilege; time that the Soul-killers be checked and utterly confounded in their wanton attempts to steal the greatest literature in the world from its true author and creator. All the proofs of Shakespeare's genius and work are to-day in Stratford-on-Avon, the shrine which holds countless treasures such as have never yet been properly examined. Let literary
England therefore look to it, that the shrine be not pilfered and desecrated before she is aware of the irreparable mischief done. Far more precious than the Crown jewels to Britain is the fact that William Shakespeare was a son of her soil. The hour has come when she should, by one invincible pronouncement of authority, guard his town, his home, associations, name, and memory with such protection as shall for ever preserve and defend it from spoliation or destruction—protection that shall never in the course of future generations, so long as the British Empire holds sway, be undone or gainsaid.

Marie Corelli.

Since writing the above article, my statements have been proved up to the hilt by the action of the Trustees and the Corporation. I have therefore nothing to retract, and strongly reaffirm my indictment against the neglect of literary England to guard and preserve what few genuine relics of Shakespeare she still possesses. Through the inability or inertia of Government, the old house of 1563 is now lost to the world in its original identity, despite the warning given. Of course, if England and Englishmen are totally indifferent to the preservation of any associations connected with Shakespeare, there is nothing more to be said. If they do not care how a public "National Trust" is managed, so much the worse for future generations. But I have yet to learn that they are so immersed in selfishness and apathy, as not to value and strive to protect the few genuine relics remaining in Stratford-on-Avon of the greatest Poet, Thinker and Philosopher of the world, of whom all Britons boast as a standing national glory.
IN Mr. Sidney Lee's pamphlet entitled "The Alleged Vandalism at Stratford-on-Avon," which is for the most part a repetition of his letter to which I allude as having been published in the Manchester Guardian, on June 29th, and other papers (see Clause 58), there is published what may be supposed to be the "final" design for the Free Library. It is the same kind of Clapham-Villa architecture as shown in the Frontispiece, and in this building Birch's shop, the house dated 1563, is to be completely lost in its "identity."