

**SHAKESPEARE'S COMEDY
OF THE MERCHANT OF
VENICE; PP. 12-236**

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WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE & WILLIAM J. ROLFE

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WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

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SHAKESPEARE'S
COMEDY OF
THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

EDITED, WITH NOTES

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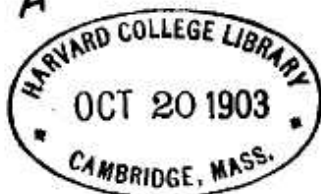
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The Editor.

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MERCHANT OF VENICE
W. P. I

To

Horace Howard Furness

"THE DEAREST FRIEND TO ME, THE kindest MAN,
THE BEST-CONDITION'D AND UNWEARIED SPIRIT
IN DOING COURTESIES"

THIS BOOK AND THE EDITION OF SHAKESPEARE

• WHICH IT INTRODUCES

ARE GRATEFULLY AND AFFECTIONATELY

DEDICATED

W. J. R.



MONUMENT AT STRATFORD



JOHN SHAKESPEARE'S HOUSE IN HENLEY STREET

THE LIFE AND WORKS OF SHAKESPEARE

His Life. — William Shakespeare was born at Stratford-upon-Avon, in the county of Warwick, England, in April, 1564. He was baptized on the 26th of April (Old Style); and, as it was a common practice to christen infants when three days old, the tradition which makes his birthday the 23d (May 3, as dates are now reckoned) is generally accepted. His father, John Shakespeare, who had been a farmer in a neighbouring village, came to Stratford about 1553, and adopted the trade of a glover. His mother, Mary Arden, belonged to a younger branch of a good old Warwickshire family, and inherited a considerable estate from her father. John Shakespeare was evidently shrewd, energetic, ambitious, and public-spirited. He made money, and was popular with

his fellow-townsmen. After passing through the lower grades of office, he was elected alderman, and in 1568 became high bailiff or mayor.



INNER COURT OF THE GRAMMAR SCHOOL, STRATFORD

Of a family of four sons and four daughters, William was the third child, but the eldest son. When he was seven years old, he was doubtless sent to the Stratford grammar school, where he got all the regular schooling he ever had. In 1582, when he was only eighteen, he *married Anne Hathaway*, of the hamlet of Shottery, near